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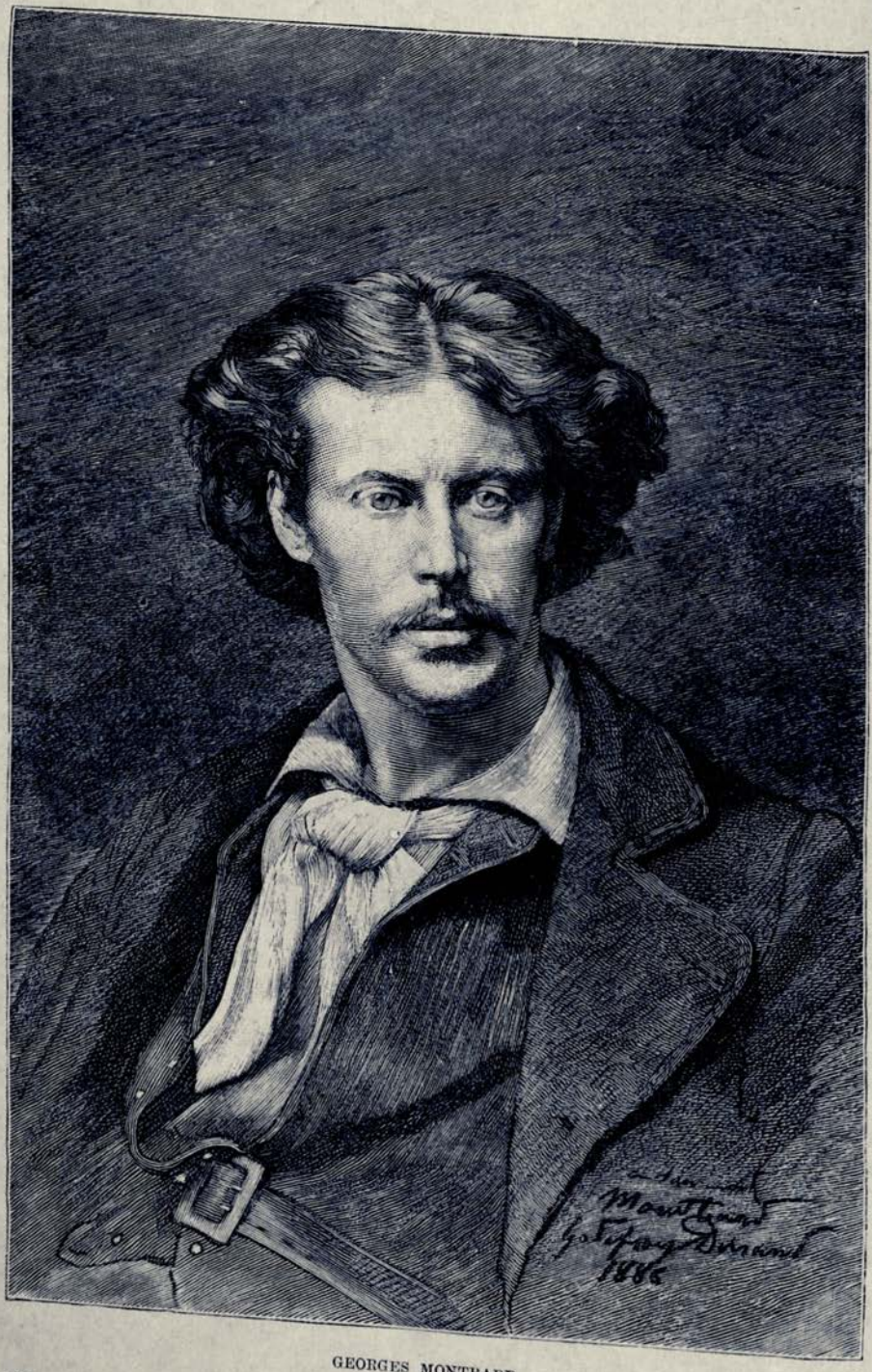

GEORGES MONTBARD.

From a Drawing by Godefroy Durand.]

G. MONTBARD

AMONG THE MOORS

SKETCHES OF Oriental Life

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LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON AND COMPANY
LIMITED
St. Dunstan's House
FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.
1894

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

PREFACE.

A CRUMBLING EMPIRE.

When you cross the immense wastes of the Moghreb, its gloomy plains, its denuded table-lands; when you pass through its dead cities where glide noiselessly these spectres clad in white, whose forefathers conquered Spain; when your eyes rest on these shattered monuments, marvels of architecture, that slowly crumble away under their shrouds of moss and lichen; when you tread the accursed soil of this Empire which its inhabitants, full of morbid indifference for the present, devoid of any regret for the past or hope in the future, allow to fall into ruins without making an effort to retard its decay; in presence of this absolute depression, this complete collapse, you cannot help being painfully impressed as at the sight of a moribund.

You feel moved at the disappearance of the powerful and singular originality of this eternal failure among civilised nations, the world of Islam, that is becoming slowly disaggregated, returning instinctively to the nomad life, to the primitive manners of its fathers, and you are filled with pity in

presence of the inconscient agony of this people of phantoms, the remains of a race of "reiters," so powerful in bygone times and to-day annihilated, that is dying quietly, with the profound resignation, tinged with so gentle a melancholy, of those who are doomed, and whose days are numbered.

The last refuge of expiring Islam, the Moghreb, hemmed in on all sides, is now sinking fast under the eyes of expectant Europe, watching jealously for its last gasp, and already forestalling its succession.

It is the crucible in which have been cast the bestiality of the negro, the ferocity of the Arab, the cunning of the Moor, the violence of the Berber, the knavery of the Jew, and the baseness of a handful of renegades, the scum of Europe, giving as a resultant the Moroccan, a compound of all these vices, a useless and pernicious kind that is fast disappearing, like the dodo, under the onset of the Occidentals, in the same manner that the negro and the yellow skin will disappear to make room for the brutal and conquering whites race.

An irresponsible and greedy barbarian, the unsuccessful and barren product of the learned schools of Greece, refractory to a civilisation that never had but an incomplete and momentary hold on his narrow undisciplined mind, rebellious to any culture, stricken with the nostalgia for his desert, the fatalist Arab is swept away, under the rude push of the Aryan, by the eddies of the feverish activity of the Occident, and returns to the place of his origin.

There, as formerly his ancestors, as to-day his fellows, he will resume, after thousands of centuries, his adventurous and wandering life. He will recommence his sanguinary quarrels, his stubborn and incessant struggles for the possession of a spring, of a well, of some piece of pasture land, lost in the

midst of the burning sands, and he will lay in wait for the caravans in order to rob them.

In the fine starlit night, when the flocks are again herded within the dark circle of the goat-hair tents, and warm and acrid effluvia from their reeking bodies fill the air; when the thin wreath of bluish smoke from a scanty fire of camel-dung shoots straight up to the calm sky; when the young tribesmen, after a daring raid, have galloped back to the douar spurring on their maddened steeds white with foam, keeping a rough hold of terrified women flung across the saddles, the wives or daughters of the men of a neighbouring tribe, whom they have surprised and massacred in the darkness, violating the dead, mutilating the corpse; when they have safely stored away their booty of human flesh, secured the captived women, bound the slaves, and collected the stolen flocks; when they have stowed in some daubed blue, red, and yellow coffers the necklaces torn from the necks of dead women, the ear-rings with shreds of flesh still adhering to them, the rings wrenched off, in their hasty retreat, with the fingers that they adorned; when in the twilight, after this ferocious hecatomb, they have prostrated themselves on the prayer-carpets, still recking with the blood of their late owners, and they have, for the fifth time during the day, proclaimed the glory of Allah and lauded Mahomet; then . . . . an ancestor, a ferocious old male with biblical bearing, with cold and sober gestures, with haughty demeanour, full of savage pride and supreme presumption, will, in his weak shrill voice, his harsh guttural and poor tongue, make the enumeration of his forefathers, recite the list of his interminable genealogies. He will, in a wordy, exaggerated and flowery rhetoric, go into the sanglant detail of his hatred against rival clans, his quarrels with other tribes.

He will wake the recollection of long-standing rancours, of secular vendettas. In his inflated, pompous, and lascivious poetry, he will tell his highway robberies, celebrate his abductions and rapes, recall the insults made to the dead, and reckon the heads that have been cut off. He will make a show of his disdainful hospitality, extol the prowesses of his own arm, the excellence of his weapons, and sing the praises of his swift steeds: the camel his faithful companion, the horse, his inseparable friend. His nervous and sickly nature, bent on marvellous and supernatural things, will prompt him to relate strange childish stories of malevolent *djinns*, who are charmed away by the power of amulets, and in absurd tales, he will bring in at every turn, Allah, the Prophet, or the Angel Gabriel, always with the sole object of making them point out the place of hidden treasure. Of a sad and melancholy disposition, he will describe the terrors of the deserts and its terrible hardships.

And the fierce tiger-hearted young men, handsome and elegant, his sons, will listen respectfully to his words, and the aged and venerable bandit, wrapped in the folds of his white woollen haïk, majestic and superb, will then rise, and, supporting himself on the robust shoulders of his grandchildren, will return to his couch, casting a sidelong glance of impotent covetousness on the tent of the captive women.

And to-morrow will be a renewal of yesterday. The old Sheik will repeat the same over and over again, his offspring will be careering in the desert, and will continue also the monotonous deeds of blood, the daily robberies, the life of everlasting brigandage.

An unconscious monotheist, a fetichist reconciled to fatality, a fanatic hypnotised by the visions of a voluptuous and

sensual hereafter, he will daily recite mechanically the obligatory prayers of Islam with his face turned towards Mecca; at once a besotted bigot, as he is a hardened criminal, an inveterate thief.

The Semite has never been anything but an abominable rascal, an insatiable, turbulent and licentious plunderer. Incapable of any self-consciousness, of rising to the level of a nation, he always remained the mere tribesman, the irreducible barbarian, the man of prey, the Semite . . . ! a self-loving egotist with an incomplete cerebral system, devoid of any notions of justice or morals, unable to distinguish between mine and thine, an Oriental lansquenet, pillaging and sacking friends and enemies alike, indifferently, without the least scruple.

At a remote period, impelled by his nature and love of rapine, coveting the luxury of his industrious neighbours, he had already left his deserts, taken up his quarters on the coasts of Asia Minor, at Sidon and at Tyr, and covered the blue waves of the Mediterranean with his pirate barks, scouring the seas as he was laying waste the plains.

Bartering, thieving, plundering, slaking his thirst for gold and sensuous indulgence, he carried off the fair-haired daughters of Greece to fill his "gynecæi;" he treacherously captured along the coasts, red-haired Celts, moody Iberians, Libyans from the Atlas, and sold them in the slave-markets.

Reduced to slavery by the Assyrians, he extemporised the banking system, gave himself up to usury and became possessed of his captors' riches. Acting as a shameless go-between, he cleverly conducted their debauches, graduated their excesses, and, while basely playing the spy upon them, was enabled to measure the degree of their weakness, and on

several occasions his undisciplined hordes captured and ransacked their capitals—Babylon and Nineveh.

Creeping humbly into the Delta, followed by their dangerous "harem," at first by a succession of pacific partial and stealthy invasions, they came and disturbed the happy homes of the honest Pharaons and of the great folks of their court, provided for their senses that were satiated with the unvarying attractions of their homely better halves, the spicy and high-flavoured relish full of intended and studied surprises of the charms of their well-trained spouses. Then, when their gay partners, these experienced shrewd women, these incomparable virtuoses in the art of stimulating the senses, overwhelmed with refined caresses their pitiful victims, hypnotised by this excess of feminine attentions, the husbands, these easy-going Benedicts, thrust their hands into the money-bags, broke the safes open and rifled the contents of the drawers. Once masters of the place, in possession of the hearts and purses of their over-confiding hosts, they called in the Hyksos, their rapacious brethren of the Euphrates, to take their share of the spoil, sent their miserable dupes about their business, placed on their own heads the "pschent" of the Pharaons, toadied the ox Apis, assumed the power and incurred the deadly hatred of the Egyptians, who ultimately drove them ignominiously away.

While the fathers were looting, the daughters corrupted. Constantly tormented by the imperious exigences of an inexorable eretheism, solicited by the furious appeals of wild desire, unable to overcome the frenzy of indomitable appetences, they feasted their exasperated sensuality, and, gorged with pleasure, bruised by violent embraces, they sunk prostrate in their shame and in the painful exaltation of their whole being.

They were stretching in the sun their supple loins encircled with golden belts. Their entrails panting, their nostrils dilated, flat on the marble of their terraces they dragged their powerful hips over the scorching slabs, lifted up their meagre bosoms and with smiling crimson lips apart, displaying the humid whiteness of their beautiful teeth, splendidly set in rosy gums, they inhaled the breeze of the sea and scented in the air the effluvia of man.

When, over the blue waves, glided the dark craft of the pirates, with a horse's head carved at the prow and manned by robust Libyans, elegant Ionians, handsome Gauls, proud Latins, the slaves of their fathers, gleams of light blazed in their sombre pupils, their sharp look searched over the hard relief of the muscles, slid along the harmonious forms and remained laden with harsh desire, in face of the superb poses, the haughty demeanour, the disdainful indifference of the men of the North, and prolonged tremors twisted their slender limbs.

Hysterical mercenaries, they bathed by turn, in bull's blood to strengthen, or in cow's milk to soften their bronze-like brown bodies; perfumed their moist flesh; shook, like mares, their heavy mass of gold and silver ornaments, and bending their croup, rigid in a supreme spasm, listened breathless to their vibrating senses and to the sound of the gold that paid them.

Perverse creatures with blackened eyelashes, dyed eyes, cheeks painted in vermilion, clad in purple, bespangled with gold and glittering gems spoiled from rifled nations, they insinuated themselves among the nations of the Occident, bringing their complicated amours, their clever depravity, their precocious impudicity; opposing to the chaste virtue of the Aryan women the resources of their artful wiles.

By softening the redoubtable muscles of the Aryan, they paralysed his nerves, instilling into his pure and ruby blood the corroding virus of their disconcerting caresses, of their degrading lecherousness; ruined its virile qualities, sapping his energy, his self-respect, and his respect for others, destroyed the family.

Carthage afterwards kept up the traditions of Tyr and Sidon. The Semite, encamped at the foot of the Atlas, turned the Mediterranean into an Arab lake, subjected under its yoke the borderers, and enacted a tribute from them. Enslaving the nations of Africa under his iron rule, he broke the bones of the vanquished kings, drawing and quartering its slaves, and crucified his own unsuccessful generals. Engulfed in the mire of his voluptuous bestiality, he entrusted the defence of Carthage and its treasures to paid mercenaries, Greeks, Iberians, Gauls, Libyans, and made world-known the Punic good faith.

One day Rome crushed the nest of brigands, levelled their infamous den, and drove them back into their deserts.

Later on, at the bidding of a visionary, they once more sallied from their solitudes, their armed mobs rushed on to the conquest of the world, and the men of Europe had a narrow escape of being all circumcised.

Sceptical and mocking Greece provided these upstarts of victory with architects, mathematicians, thinkers, savants. She tried to smoothe a little the asperities of this crew of highwaymen, and to educate to a certain extent these primitive and dull understandings, roughly outlining for them a semblance of civilisation, a rather curious syncretism made up of all sorts of elements which, being skin-deep, flickered for a moment and then died out.

These arrant cut-throats, incapable of carrying on this borrowed civilisation, incompatible with the aspirations of the race, with its instincts of depredation and savage independence, set to quarrelling among themselves, infested the seas and laid waste the coasts, giving free scope to their ungovernable passions, viewing with perfect indifference the decay of their cities, their monuments, their dwellings, filled with irresistible antipathy for a civilisation that was beyond their comprehension, pining for their tents, their roving life and their deserts.

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TANGIER.

Tangier, 2nd January.

We are in the roadstead off Tangier. Three hours ago we were dining at Gibraltar. The night is dark, the air sultry: there is a slight breeze from the west, warm and damp, driving slowly above us heavy clouds laden with rain. In the gloom in front of us, blending almost with the sky, lies a sombre, opaque mass with specks of light—Tangier.

The *Djebel-Tarik*, "Gibraltar," our little steamer that runs between Gibraltar and Tangier when the weather permits, has just hove to, and signals its arrival by sharp and piercing steam-whistles, which follow one another in rapid succession. It almost seems as if there were a strain of anger and impatience in this shrill, incessant repetition.

Then in the obscurity that shrouds us, a dull, measured rumbling, a confused echo of voices, is faintly heard in the distance. The sound comes nearer, grows louder, clearer, more definite. You hear distinctly the quick, sudden plash of oars; the voices swell into a hoarse clamour, and all at once, in the rays of light thrown by the lanterns of the steamer, you catch sight of boats filled with wildly

vociferating Arabs. In a trice they clamber up the side and rush upon deck. In the deafening racket of frightful yells and fierce wrangles, they take possession of us, seize our luggage, pack us off into their boats pell-mell, with our trunks, dogs, and baggage. They quarrel for the last time, and row us away towards Tangier.

Forestier, carried off by a couple of sturdy fellows, has been gently lowered into a boat, crammed with dirty Jewesses and convicts let out from Spanish gaols, whom the *Djebel-Tarik* is bringing home to their native country.

Ingram is in another boat with me, as well as his valet, the phlegmatic Brooks, who, stiff, cold, encased in his impassive respectability, is holding the dogs in leash, and looking after the luggage, absolutely indifferent to everything else around him. Marshall has been deposited on shore, in some spot or other, we don't know where.

The night is as black as pitch. Our boat, deeply laden, is in danger of being swamped at the least false move. After about twenty minutes the men ship their oars and leap into the water, which reaches above their knees. Each of them takes one of us astride his shoulders, throws his load on the sand, and leaves him there to go and fetch other poor wretches, who are abandoned in the same way, one here, another there, haphazard along the beach.

I hail Ingram, who cannot be far off. He replies, and we grope our way to one another over the rocks and pools of water, for we cannot see an inch before us. We are trying to find out our bearings, when a lantern gleams. Some one calls our names; we howl ours in reply. It is Harris, who has crossed to Tangier a week before, to make preparations for our expedition into the interior. He has come to meet us with his servant Selim. He takes us to the Custom-house, where we find Forestier, Marshall, Brooks, the dogs Don and Rover, who are completely dazed, our boatman and our luggage.

Harris, speaking a jargon of Arabic, which nobody, not even himself, understands, explains a host of things to the Custom-house officers, muffled in their burnooses. They respond with great volubility and wild gesticulating, and everything is arranged.

We make our way to "La Villa de France," followed by the

men carrying our luggage, lighted by the lanterns of the hotel porters. We climb a steep street, which seems as though it would never end, splashing in muddy pools, floundering in ruts, slipping on soft refuse that emits unnameable odours, stumbling against shapeless masses lying on the ground,—Arabs fast asleep under the open sky. Massive gates provided with enormous bolts are opened before us, creaking on their rusty hinges, and hastily shut again as soon as we have passed through. Then, still ascending, we cross a big square, where, wrapped in burnooses, their heads resting on their knees, crouching figures with harsh features are guarding herds of oxen. Through these we have some difficulty in clearing a passage. A fine rain is falling, a Scotch mist, which makes us wet to the skin.

At last we reach the hotel, and eat as hearty a supper as if we had never dined. We dry our clothes before a nice fire, smoke a few cigarettes, and then we retire to our rooms.

* * * * * *

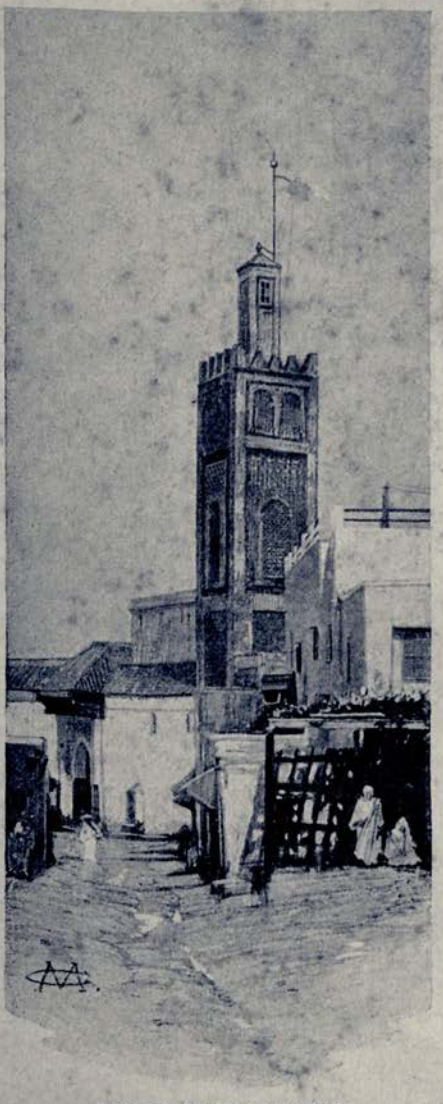
With the first streak of dawn I jump out of bed. A sunbeam that comes through an opening in the shutters dispels the semi-darkness of my room, and falling on the wall gleams like a bit of melted gold. I open my window, and the room is resplendent, flooded with light, perfumed with a fragrance of trees and dewy flowers, with that keen and delicious scent which rises from the earth after a storm of rain.

Before me lay a broad expanse of sky of intense blue; on the far distant horizon, the coasts of Spain, a long, grey streak tinged with red; while Tangier stretches away to the sea in an endless number of snow-white terraces, forming a vivid contrast to the deep blue waters.

Walls of mosques, covered with brown and green tiles, sparkle in some places like diamonds. A network of dark lines intersecting this stream of light indicates the streets and crossways. Here and there clusters of green trees appear dark amid these walls, reflecting a dazzling brightness. Then on the topmost summit, dominating the town, rises, in spectral whiteness, the citadel, whose ramparts stand in vigorous outline against the sky.

In the foreground are the embattled walls of the town, its gates with horseshoe arches, and the square, the immense square that we crossed

last night. The drovers are still there with their cattle, but other herds and flocks have come: oxen, sheep, goats. Loaded camels are squatting on the ground; donkeys trudging in every direction; mules tethered to posts, munching their oats and dealing sly kicks whenever they find a chance. A huge white-robed crowd with pointed hoods moves slowly beneath me. A vague murmur mounts upward, mingled with an acrid, special characteristic odour, that undefinable odour to be found only in the East.



MARINE STREET, TANGIER.

A faint bluish, transparent vapour floats round the hotel, veiling big clumps of trees. In this soft mist Arab waiters and porters move slowly, silently, like shadows.

Suddenly on the air, a shrill, long-drawn cry soars over the town, dominating all other sounds. The *muedden* has come forth on the balcony of the minaret of the great mosque; has turned towards the *Kebla*, hoisting a white flag, and proclaiming, with the morning prayer, the declaration of the faith of Islam, which at the same moment in the septentrion and in the south, in the orient and in the occident, all true believers

THE GREAT MOSQUE OF TANGIERS. [*To face p.* 4.

are beginning to utter: "There is no other god but God, and Mahomet is his prophet." Instantly other flags are floating on the minarets of other mosques, the *muedden* appears, the same words fly away.

A deep silence has fallen on all. The kneeling crowd, facing the East, has reverently repeated the creed of the *tholba*, and the last accents are borne away in a supreme vibration, a final slow, plaintive note, profoundly sad, "Allah-Kebar"—God is very great.

I am in a hurry to see the town. Ingram, in his shirt-sleeves, scours about, deeply engrossed in examining his guns, trying the triggers, oiling the cocks, cleaning the barrels, threatening his dogs, who jump about his legs, to send them back to England; at the same time storming against Brooks, who has lost his head in the first disorder of our arrival.

Marshall, as lazy as a dormouse, is still in bed, idling away the best part of the morning, and humming, in his tiny falsetto voice, "Has anybody seen my Mary Ann?" his matutinal song.

Forestier, bitten with the craze of the East, has already got his sketch-book and his pencils ready, and is as eager as I to see. We set out, leaving Ingram to his guns, Marshall to his ditty, and Brooks, poor Brooks! to extricate himself as best he can from a chaos of trunks, portmanteaus, cases, which litter our rooms, invade the corridors, and block up the entrance-hall of the hotel.

We are on the great market-place on the *Souk*. The sun has already dried up the mud in which we were floundering so horribly last night. It is an immense stretch of uneven ground, with ridges and deep ruts, a regular marsh when it rains, a Sahara when the sun parches this clayey soil, which cracks and splits in every direction. It extends in a steep slope right to the walls of Tangier. A road paved with flags runs across it from the top down to one of the town gates. On each side of the gate are narrow shops, about four feet wide, looking as if they were hung on the walls. In some of these, weapons are gleaming, bright coloured stuffs glittering in the sun. In others are a sort of stove, made of a few stones and a handful of clay on which tiny pieces of meat are roasting on spits. Close by are butchers, grocers, bakers, confectioners, serving their poor customers.

Half-way up the hill there is a saint's tomb, four whitewashed walls. At the top stands a cemetery, strewn with stones, graves, and clusters of cactuses and aloes of a dusty grey-green colour.

It is market-day; a numerous crowd in an incessant bustle fills the square. Files of camels, roaring fearfully, stride along, their heads towering above ours, and their long, bare necks undulating with snake-like movements. Little black donkeys kick with their front feet all the dogs that come within their reach. There are herds of small, thickset oxen, with short horns and tawny hair; flocks of black goats, with red spots and sharply curved noses; stubborn mules, bent on biting one another; and a dense throng of Arabs, in white burnooses, among whom some Jews, in blue robes and black skull-caps, roam stealthily, with furtive looks.

A NEGRO FROM TIMBUCTOO.

Now and then, a European on horseback, a Spaniard riding a mule carrying sacks, a red-faced and white-helmeted Englishman turning over his guide-book, introduce an incongruous element into this tranquil harmony of white, of grey, of brown-reds, that mingle and blend into a general neutral tint of an exquisite softness, on this great background of the blue sky.

In this crowd there are natives of Sousse in dark-blue garments and black *djellabiehs*, peasants from the Gharb, wrapped like Romans in the folds of their rough woollen *haiks*. Here an old negro in rags from Timbuctoo, with hair plaited with fine leather thongs adorned with shells, is beating cymbals, making hideous grimaces, twisting his body

into every shape and form. There, a magnificent negress, tall, supple, erect, is carrying on her head small, round, flat loaves, on a wooden tray, covered with a woollen cloth. On her long slim feet there is a slight coat of dust, which gives them a very faint grey-bluish gloss, while her raised-up naked arm gleams with bronze reflects. With her head thrown far back, she walks on straight, with a superb carriage, chewing between her teeth a corner of her *haïk*.

A NEGRESS BREAD-SELLER.

Farther on we pass a row of countrywomen sitting by the road-side. They are almost completely shrouded under the thick folds of their woollen dress and the gigantic brims of their straw hats, decked with gay ribbons. All of them keep the lower part of their faces concealed with the borders of their *haïks*, leaving nothing visible except their dark eyes stained with *koheul*, wonderfully brilliant under their thick eyebrows, almost rejoining on their foreheads, often tattooed with a blue cross. Baskets in front of them contain *rhibich* for the camels, thistles for the asses and mules, fowls' eggs, and butter.

Near the tomb of the saint a group of children, in blue, red-rose mauve dresses, is collected round a white-haired negro with cheeks covered with scars. He sings in a sad broken voice, which can scarcely be heard, accompanying the song on a sort of square guitar, a *gimbry*. Strange and weird is the effect of

this primitive melody, rhythmed under the burning sun, in the great plains of mysterious Africa, where no European has ever penetrated.

Absorbed in his own thoughts, the old child of the Dark Continent will croon for hours together his plaintive melody, muttering this same sad note, this unvarying strain, escaping like a sigh from his thick, pale, colourless lips.

Close by the wall of a brazier's shop sits a story-teller, a Moor, a young *thaleb* from Fez, fresh from the University of Karaouïn, exquisitely neat and clean, his nails white and rose, carefully trimmed, dyed with *henna*. Enveloped in a hundred folds of white muslin, he recites in a rather affected manner some pretty little trifles, which a select audience applaud judiciously. He must have made some pointed remark at our expense, for his hearers turn round laughing to look at us, and whisper a great deal among themselves.

At the bottom of the *Souk*, on the left of the town, a crowd is gathered in front of a shop. Amid brown and white burnooses, soft tinted *sulhams*, scarlet *kaftans*, *ferragieh*, *fez*, pouches of red and citron coloured morocco, gleam *khangiars*, *yataghans*, copper-lined powder-flasks shaped like a negress's breasts, sabres with hafts of rhinoceros horn, on whose finely tempered blades the grandiose mottoes of famous Spanish grandees are engraved in gold.

In this group two men stand strongly out, distinct in face and character. They are mountaineers, natives of the Riff—Riffeans, as they are called at Tangier—Amazirghs, as they term themselves; a branch of the great Berber family, the brothers of the Kabyles in Algeria. Indifferent Moslems, as they were formerly lukewarm Christians, they are desperately attached to their independence, and believe in scarcely anything except their guns. Aryans separated for so many centuries from their European kinsmen, they have forgotten them, these mongrel Semitic Aryans, these inveterate rebels, always in revolt against the Sultan, incessantly waging wars among themselves. Tall, sturdy, well-shaped, built like athletes, they combine elegance with strength. They speak in a loud, guttural, sharp tone, and their imperious bearing, their fierce looks, and abrupt gestures produce an imposing and commanding effect. One of them has a dark complexion

with a Roman contour; the other, with his reddish hair and his deep, steel-blue eyes, represents the Gallic type. They glance boldly; have small, white well-set teeth, high cheek-bones, prominent chins. Their features have a firm and resolute expression, and their whole demeanour is tinged with an air of ferocity.

Around their heads is entwined a band of red cloth, bespangled with silver—their gun-case. Their sinewy arms, left uncovered by their chesnut-coloured burnooses of coarse wool, are striped with narrow bands of embroidered silk, spotted with coloured tufts; and their broad hoods, falling far down from their shoulders, reveal powerful necks burnt by the sun.

Under the burnoose, a wide belt of scarlet silk confines a white linen *gandourah* at the waist. Their legs are bare, vigorous, the attachments of the muscles are delicate, the ankles salient. On their feet they wear sandals of goatskin, with the hair outside, laced with cords of plaited *alfa*. A *tchekara*, a double-pouched wallet for bullets, of red and yellow leather, with interlaced ornaments, set off by fine silk tufts, is slung across their shoulders. At their sides hang the *guern*, powder-flasks, in guilloched copper; and from cords of blue silk, slung likewise, *khangiars* are suspended. The broken handle of one of these poniards—that of the red-haired fellow—has been rudely but solidly bound with thongs of untanned hide. Their sinewy hands, the veins of which stand out in strong relief, constantly fidget about the expanding ivory butt of their muskets, their trusty friends, *m'ksala*, with their long barrels encircled with silver, ribbon-like streaks. The people around approach them with respect, and even with some degree of fear.

Then there are water-carriers, bending under the weight of their goatskin loads. The skin has been used in its natural shape; the belly of the animal being slit lengthwise, the carcase taken out, and a long copper tap inserted in the neck. The skin swells out with the liquid poured into it, the legs are stiff, and the inflated hide has so striking an appearance of reality that you are impressed both with its lugubriousness and its comicality.

The *aguador*, with the perspiration streaming down his face,

trudges through the crowd, clanking his copper goblets one against the other, dispensing his water, made tepid by the heat, insipid by the constant jolting, and emitting strong and repugnant effluvia of the he-goat. His legs are slender, his arms sinewy. A piece of yellow stuff encircling a greasy cap, stiffened by dirt and the accumulated perspiration, serves as a turban; breeches of soiled linen complete his costume.

A WATER-SELLER.

Occasionally a rich Moor, on a mule caparisoned in velvet embroidered with gold and clad in a silk *haïk*, rides through the crowd, which deferentially make way for him.

My buckle, tall boots, and particularly my ribbed velvet coat, seem to excite the lively curiosity of the street boys, who, from time to time, slyly put out their monkey paws to feel the coat. Our gloves are the subject of endless comment, and provoke incessant bursts of laughter, especially when we take them off to sketch.

We pass the gate of the *Souk*, a worm-eaten gate plated with copper sheets with greenish streaks. The base is worn and shiny, in consequence of the constant contact with the burnooses and men's flesh. The upper part, quite grey, is encrusted with a thick layer of dust. The grey-bearded gate-keeper lolls by the wall on a cage of palms, a *kafa*, smoking cigarettes, and mumbling his prayers as he turns the beads of his rosary.

The street is very broad at this part. The high walls of the ramparts, covered with lichens on their sides, and bushes and dry plants on their embattled summits, are flanked by a few sparse, tumble-down shops. From their dislocated eaves hang fragments of tattered stuff.

Donkeys, mules, camels, wallow in the half-dried mire. Mendicants in rags covered with vermin, exhibit fearful ulcers and present a loathsome aspect. A blind man on his knees appeals, in the name of Allah, to the pity of the passers-by. These vacant orbs, these bloodshot chasms, are frightful to look upon. We throw him a trifle and pass quickly on.

A GATEWAY OF TANGIER.

Soon we come into a small, narrow square—the little *Souk*—lined with shops and full of life. A pretty but very dilapidated Moorish fountain, of fine style, is built in an angle formed by the square and the adjacent street. Here women, clad in *haïks* of white wool, bring their pitchers, the water-carriers their skins, and Europeans their pails. Women bread-sellers with veils on are ranged in a row by the side of the walls. Fronting the fountain stands the English post-office, with barred windows, and close by a café and a billiard-room. On the walls

placards are posted. The square is full of people: Spaniards, lazy Moors, artful Jews concluding bargains, busy negroes, porters waiting for clients, guides, interpreters watching for newcomers and pestering them with offers of service. A little Jew is bent on tacking himself to us. He dogs our steps, and it is impossible to get rid of him.

Somewhat lower down, we stop before the finely-carved door of the great mosque, with its very elegant arch and its flange of arabesques. An Arab is kneeling at the bottom of the steps, praying in a loud voice, and telling his beads. He throws us an angry glance, and favours us with an imprecation, which our little rogue of a Jew makes haste to interpret for our benefit: "Dog of a Christian, son of a dog! May your father and your grandfather be cursed, and swelter in everlasting fire!" This kind compliment fails to produce the least impression on us.

AN ARAB IN PRAYER.

There are two expressions which we are constantly hearing—*baleuk*, which means "look out," and *la bass*, which is equivalent to "all right."

Two Moors meet, clasp each other's right hand, and inquire how things are "at home"—they carefully avoid mentioning their wives—*la bass!* Then, after some further polite ceremonies, for they are exceedingly punctilious, they again inquire if matters are really going on well—*la bass!* and always *la bass!* the inevitable *la bass!* punctuating all their phrases. If there is a mule behind us—*Baleuk!* When a porter laden with a big box comes by—*Baleuk!* Should a horseman come dashing along—*Baleuk!* It matters not whether the mule has

broken your ribs, whether the porter's box has dislocated your shoulder, whether the rider's stirrup has torn away a piece of your coat, when the warning cry *Baleuk!* rings in your ears. Fortunately there are no carriages, drays, or vehicles of any sort in Morocco.

All along the streets, nearly down to the harbour, shops succeed each other with a few interruptions. There tourists are bargaining for pottery, Moorish slippers, and "souvenirs of Morocco." Just before reaching the harbour, we take on our left a street leading to the citadel. Our unceremonious Israelite guides us through a labyrinth of narrow streets, from which, I ought to acknowledge it, we could never have extricated ourselves without his help.

STREET IN TANGIER.

And what streets! Dark narrow passages between high walls, with barred windows, parts of wall crumbling away at the base, and threatening every moment to tumble down. Through half-open doors, thick vapours of fetid odours escape. The road, paved in some places, cut up in others, is a sink of liquid mud, in which float loathsome carcases, dead cats, putrid fowls. Sickly children, with bleared eyes, dressed in rags, and a prey to vermin, are dabbling in this filth, by which we are splashed at every moment. We quicken our pace, to escape from this horrible stench; and in another street, a

little less dirty, we take refuge in a Moorish café, at the foot of a steep ascent leading to the citadel.

The ceiling is constructed of wooden rafters resting on a thick girder, propped by a single piece of wood, forming a column in the middle of the room. The bare ground is covered with mats, set off by coloured designs, in which violet predominates. A slight whitewashed elevation, about two feet high by two feet wide, likewise covered with mats, serves as a divan, and runs along the walls, laid out also with bright-coloured mats, ornamented with arabesques representing the arches over the door of a mosque. From the ceiling hang lamps made of tin-plate, and embellished with coloured glass. In a corner, at a little counter, with a *moucharaby* gallery above it, sits the *kaouadji*, in a blue vest with red trousers, trimmed with white scalloped cord. A square hole in the wall serves as a receptacle for his cups, glasses, sugar; and before the counter on a brick stove, a big copper coffee-pot is simmering.

At the entrance a negro, all in blue, pounds coffee in a marble mortar, moaning like a baker when he is kneading his dough. Seven or eight Moors, seated in the middle of the apartment, take their coffee, talking of their affairs, or playing on instruments of various kinds.

They give us a very civil welcome. The coffee is excellent, and we fall to sketching the place. We have scarcely begun when all the customers rise, and enter into a lively discussion with the proprietor, now and then casting angry glances at us. Our Israelite explains what we had half suspected. The customers are furious at their portraits being taken, and give it as their ultimatum that they won't put their foot inside the café again if the *roumis* are not turned out at once. We go on sketching and drinking our coffee without paying the least heed to the proprietor's selfish rebukes. As soon as we have finished we take our leave, and climb the rough, bare scorching slope which leads to the citadel, at the "Whip Gate," *Bab-el-asa.*

There is a great charm in this old gate, whose pointed, depressed arch, which, with a slight break at the top and narrow at the base, has that delicious outline so characteristic of Moorish architecture. Unfortunately it is falling into ruins, sapped at its base—like all the other

THE PALACE OF THE SULTAN.

[*To face p.* 14.

buildings of Morocco and the rest of the East, through the constant battering of the loads of beasts of burden. The wood of the massive door is rotten, the copper sheets that overlay it are falling off, the locks are rust-eaten, and nothing is ever repaired. The superposed layers of whitewash are accumulating, obliterating the fine angles of the lines; the delicate reliefs of the arch, formed by a triple series of little curves, adjoining the large ogive on the outside. All that is passing away, crumbling bit by bit, through the general indifference, the unspeakable carelessness of this race of visionaries, pursuing for centuries its religious chimera, in which all its vigour, its energies, its aspirations are merged; this slow suicide of Islam.

As we stand, with the *Souk* at our feet, stretching from the other side of the town, our cicerone tell us, without the least scruple, a legend current among the Arabs and scarcely flattering to his race. In times of drought, so they say, the Jews are let loose in the *Souk*, and commanded to pray for rain. It seems, according to Moorish ideas, that the sight of this foul rabble is so offensive to the Almighty that He hastens to send down rain in torrents in order to get rid of their presence.

In the *Kasbah* are located the official buildings of Tangier, the law-courts, the prisons, the Pasha's palace, and the houses of some functionaries.

After a ramble through winding streets, irregular cross-ways, and polluted alleys, we find ourselves in a wide courtyard. The rugged ground is covered with deep ruts. The part next to the buildings is irregularly paved with blocks of unhewn stone. In the centre heaps of refuse merge, like islands, from the midst of a pool of black mud, which emit the most noxious smells. A few saddled horses are tethered, goats are frolicking, driving back from time to time mangy dogs, ravenous after the carcase of a camel, from which they gnaw with their fangs the blood-stained flesh. Black vultures are screeching aloft, describing concentric circles, waiting for an opportunity to obtain a share of the hideous quarry.

We enter an old forsaken building, the ancient Treasury. At the top of some steps is a portico, a double colonnade, with horseshoe arches

of remarkable purity. The mosaic paving, of charming design, is broken and torn up. The disjointed doors, exquisitely panelled, are rotting on their hinges. Beggars who have taken up their abode there, are dressing their repulsive sores. The whole aspect of the place is one of heartrending desolation.

At the side are the prisons. You enter by a large ogived folding door into the high-ceiled courtyard, paved with glittering pebbles.

LAW-COURTS AND TREASURY IN THE KASBAH.

A massive clay bank, about three feet wide, of irregular level, white-washed like the walls, runs round the yard on two sides—on the right at the entrance, and at the farther end. In the wall on the right a large arched opening is closed by a thick door with formidable bolts. In the front of it, vertical and horizontal pieces of wood, in the form of a cross, firmly nailed together, impart a most sinister aspect to the place.

In the middle of this door an aperture about the size of a man's head has been cut, in the shape of a heart, with the point downwards.

It is through this hole that the prisoners are allowed to see their relatives and friends, and receive from them the food that the Sultan, absorbed in the duties of the harem, is always forgetting to dole out to them.

It is by this one door that the prisoners enter and their dead bodies are brought out.

The farthest wall is hung with the guns, powder-flasks, and pouches of the guard. On the other walls there are cotes for pigeons, some of which are fluttering under the vaults. Mattresses and quilts are piled up indiscriminately on the benches, and the floor is littered with empty boxes, pots, copper vessels, and kitchen utensils.

VISITING PRISONERS.

Near the barred door, the warder, a toothless, sour-looking, white-bearded old soldier, pent up in his hood and the folds of his multifarious burnooses, keeps his watchful eye on the prisoners and their visitors as he smokes his pipe.

A woman has just entered with a bundle of clothes and some provisions. The gaoler with a shaky voice shouts out a name; one of the prisoners, gaunt, with hollow eyes, his livid face pressed against the rim of the hole, stretches out an emaciated hand, and eagerly clutches the food brought by his wife, down whose cheeks big tears are flowing. She holds up her child; he kisses it with a smothered howl, and the poor little thing, trembling under this wild caress, timidly strokes its father's wan cheeks with its tiny plump hands. For the

wretched man, this is a gleam of light in the darkness of that hell. Poor people!

The unhappy woman has left; she walked out rigid, with dazed eyes, her child rolled up in the corner of her *haïk*.

I take my turn in looking through the execrable hole. In the semi-obscurity I gradually make out an arcade, with a double row of square pillars, opening on an uncovered courtyard. It has at one time been paved with tiles, some of which still remain, disappearing beneath the rot of refuse. At the farther end of the court there is a fountain, where these miserables get water and wash themselves. They rush round the aperture, begging in most lamentable accents, but move off at a growl from the warder. I throw them a few piastres, over which they fiercely wrangle, with horrible cursing and a sinister rattling of chains.

Oh, the awful clanking of those chains, this dire struggle in the gloom, these gaunt figures tearing and howling like wild beasts, this stench of corpses! I shall never forget it, never!

Iron rings riveted round the ankles, and connected by a link a foot long, force the criminal to take very short steps, and the friction of the fetters has worn away the flesh and laid bare the bones.

In the semi-darkness I catch a glimpse of motionless bodies lying on the ground between the pillars of the arcade, with nothing but rags to cover them. They are prisoners asleep, perhaps in the throes of death. From the nails in the walls hang jagged *koufas* and strips of dirty linen. In a corner, between two stones, flickers the faint bluish flame of a fire, where they cook scraps of food. A warm, reeking, nauseous smell pervades this Gehenna.

How fresh the air seems when we get out! How delightful it is to see the blue sky once more!

Before the Court of Justice we find the Pasha engaged in trying an intricate affair. The plaintiff and defendant are on their knees, making out their cases at the same time, with a great deal of vociferation and gesticulation; while the Pasha, exasperated, shouts above the din, and threatens to send them both to prison if they won't give each other time to speak.

Soldiers in tall conical *fez*, dressed in blue and white burnooses, are posted at the side, ready at the first sign to carry out the peremptory order. Others are enjoying their cigarettes under the colonnade at the entrance.

We leave His Excellency the Pasha—with one or several tails—to his duties, in order to walk on the terrace, where three or four heavy guns are lying idly on their carriages. A stalwart varlet of an artillery-man, who looks very much like a pirate, jabbers a few words in French, descanting on the qualities of his gun, vaunting the accuracy of its practice, and manifesting in the most barefaced fashion his desire for *backsheesh*, which we bestow upon him all the more readily as the scamp does not in the least deserve it. It is the regular thing here; they ask for *backsheesh* quite as naturally as they cry *baleuk!* as they say *la bass!* at every moment, without thinking, naturally, and we, as a matter of course, give it at every moment, without thinking, naturally.

INTERIOR OF THE PRISON.

From this place we pass through the upper gate, opening at the top of a deep slope, and descend to the *Souk*, by a road lined with cactuses, aloes, and tall reeds. We then make our way to the hotel, flanked by our persistent son of Israel, and we see the obstinate little rascal take his station by the entry, to watch our exit, and pilot us again, whether we like it or not, in spite of two or three thumps administered to him by Selim, who had a crow to pluck with him.

* * * * * *

We are in the bustle of preparations for our departure.

In one of the big rooms of the hotel, Harris has stored the paraphernalia for our camp. The place is crammed, and the hall nearly

blocked up. Everything is heaped up pell-mell on the floor: boxes on top of one another, piles of trunks ready to topple over, pyramids of portmanteaus, camp-beds, bales of canvas, picket ropes and poles, the gear and furniture for our tents. Besides these, waterproof bags stuffed with clothes, linen, and blankets, cartridge boxes, guns, saddles, bridles, a petroleum stove, a violin, a table, lanterns, and a quantity of other things, are strewn on the ground.

Harris, like most of his countrymen, is fond of comfort; and since he holds that the stomach has a right to serious consideration, he has made due arrangements to provide for its requirements. Ingram points to four strong boxes with screwed lids, sent from London. They are filled with comestibles, and he obligingly enumerates the contents: tea, coffee, preserves, biscuits, pickles of all sorts, bouillon Liebig's, ox-tail soups, smoked tongues, York hams, and those horrible highly-spiced sauces which set the throats of us Frenchmen all on fire, though they only tickle the palate of the sons of Albion. The drinkables include champagne, chartreuse, and whisky. Of course the pepper, mustard, and salt have not been forgotten, nor the candles for the evenings in camp. The miniature medicine chest remains under the charge of Forestier, who is to act as apothecary.

Ingram shows himself quite in his element in the midst of the confusion, roaming about everywhere, handling everything, adding to the disorder under pretence of setting things to rights, teasing his dogs, and keeping an eye on unfortunate Brooks, who, with a woe-begone air, wanders among the multifarious piles, making superhuman efforts to convert the huge jumble into something like order. Hypnotised by his guns, his ammunition, his dogs, Ingram burnishes with his own hand the gleaming barrels, spreads his cartridges out on the ground, counting them, examining them, classifying them, and then putting them back carefully one by one in the gorgeous cases of yellow leather plated with copper corners, and fastened by safety locks of marvellous complexity. His restless dogs poke their noses everywhere, get entangled in the ropes, bring down the unevenly piled boxes with a crash, and trample on everything, leaving on our tent canvas ineradicable traces of their complete want of education. They are always between somebody's legs,

particularly Forestier's. Don especially shows a marked tendency to go and take refuge there when his irate master threatens to skin him alive. Forestier, whose equilibrium is menaced by this unlucky predilection, has constantly to keep on the *qui vive* in order to repel the unfortunate brute, who nevertheless persists in his endeavours. Forestier gets wild at last, and takes a violent dislike to his tormentor.

From time to time, amidst the din of packing, the clatter of falling boxes, you hear a sound like the breaking of a guitar string. It is Marshall's shrill, falsetto voice, who, in the interval between two yawns, treats us to one of those horrible puns with which his head is crammed. This weakly, flute-like voice of his makes the Arabs smile. They crowd round him as he lies in the canvas, idly stretching out his long, lank legs, and seem anxious to ascertain whether anything is wanting with him.

A PRISONER.

Harris, in all the ardour of the preparations for the journey, has his eye on everything, and bustles about as if it were a matter of life and death. He introduces to us a tall young fellow with a tanned skin, square shoulders, and sinewy limbs—Señor Antonio, a Spaniard, our guide. Besides his own language he speaks Arabic fluently, and can even manage to murder a few sentences in French. It seems that he is an excellent shot, which augurs well for keeping our larder well stocked with fresh meat.

His bitch Mitza, a pretty little animal with a red coat, extremely coquettish, is already setting her cap at Don and Rover. These, like well-bred dogs, mindful of their respectability, think it improper of her to take such liberties, and receive her advances coldly.

Four Arabs pack up the tents, cord the trunks, prop up the boxes, and put the things in order. They shout a great deal, and gesticulate still more. They have been engaged, together with five others whose arrival we are expecting, to act as muleteers and servants for the journey.

Selim, like a spoilt valet who has a pretty conceit of himself, goes fussing about, making plenty of noise, but doing very little work.

A grey-haired soldier, with a parchment-like face like that of an old woman, arrives from the British Embassy. It is under his guidance that we are going to make the journey. His name is Kaïd Hadj Mohammed, a dear old scamp, as Harris calls him, in a good-humoured, condescending fashion. We exchange civilities with the representative of the Sultan; and as our presence is quite useless, Forestier and I decamp briskly and return to the town.

In the *Souk*, near the tomb of the saint, a dense crowd is gathered round a group of Arabs. They are serpent charmers; we join the throng to see. Two men are squatting on the ground. One of them, aged, bearded, with a hang-dog face, is beating a big drum with his hand in a desultory fashion, and chanting in a drawling voice. The other, young, beardless, with a cunning look, is playing on a bamboo flute, with a slow melancholy rhythm. A third, the charmer, a tall, slim, bony figure, is leaping round a reed basket covered with goatskin, singing in a hollow plaintive tone, broken occasionally by a sharp piercing note like a whistle.

His strange aspect makes a deep impression on you. His face is of an ascetic leanness; his high, bare forehead is strongly bulged; his temples deeply furrowed. His sunken eyes flash with extraordinary brilliancy, and his small, sharp teeth, exceedingly white, gleam between thin, half-opened lips. The chin is roughly defined, and the projecting cheekbones seem bent on bursting the skin, which scarcely seems able to cover them. His dense black hair, reaching down to his heels,

completes his striking and fantastic appearance. A long blue shirt, clinging to his bones, sets off his spectral figure with hard, shroud-like folds.

All at once he kneels down, utters one last invocation, and brusquely lifting the goat-skin, he plunges his hand into the basket and takes out a cobra, which he waves in the air. He walks round the crowd, which recoils before the uplifted arm round which the reptile is writhing. Then, returning to the centre of the circle, he allows it to crawl upon his breast, draws it back, twines it round his wrists, his neck, his legs, puts it under his feet, excites it with his wand, seizes its tail with his teeth, and when the infuriated creature with glittering eyes twists and writhes in a terrible manner, he grasps it by the middle, and puts his arms, his forehead, his tongue to its jaws. His blood streams from the repeated bites of the cobra, and the crowd, charmed and fascinated, throws at the feet of the charmer a heap of coppers.

A SNAKE CHARMER.

The spectacle has disgusted us. Forestier is very pale, and we make off with all speed. Just as we are leaving the crowd, we find ourselves face to face with our little scamp of a Jew; he has watched our exit, followed us, and does not look in the least as if he intended to leave us. It is useless to dismiss him, he would follow us all the same. We let

him do as he likes, and so he is installed as our guide in spite of ourselves. It was written, doubtless, like everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen in Morocco. Allah is great, Mahomet is his prophet, and Moses our cicerone. May the will of Allah be done, may Mahomet be contented, and Moses satisfied!

We wend our way by chance into one of the narrow roads which open on the "marine." Keeping a sharp look-out, his ears well open, Moses divines at once our slightest wishes. Cunning as an ape, he discovers in a trice the direction of our thoughts, gives them form and substance, and, if need be, unravels our doubts with the perspicacity of a Red Indian. His weasel-like face, his officiousness, and especially his endless garrulity, prove somewhat of a bore, but with the particular versatility of his race he quickly adapts himself to the situation, perceives at once what it is we most wish to see, and, with an unerring eye and infallible judgment, he takes us straight away to picturesque, charming nooks, whose originality, wealth of colour, and boldness of outline are simply marvellous.

Moses rises in our esteem. The artful rogue, feeling himself appreciated, puts on airs, assumes a louder tone, lords it over the passers-by, and goes beyond the bounds of discretion in his desire to give us a glimpse of the interior of Moorish dwellings. Pushing open a gate, he leads us into a small courtyard. The ground is paved with flagstones, gleaming with water. Against a wall, opposite the gate, a charming fountain, ornamented with mosaics, pours its water into a marble basin. On the right and left are horseshoe arches, with pillars overlaid with tiles, in exquisite taste, opening into profound recesses, shrouded in semi-darkness. In the middle of the yard a colossal negro, with the muscles of a beast-tamer, legs and upper part of body bare, treads, with sharp, regular beat, a pile of linen covered with a layer of lather. The sun shines straight upon his shaven skull, irradiating the bust and the strip of cloth round his waist, leaving in the shade the rest of the body; and the light, caught by the asperities of the muscles, throws them into still greater relief, by the strong opposition of the shadows. A hoarse guttural cry accompanies each of his movements, and glistening perspiration trickles down his limbs. A shapely

young Moor, with delicate features and superb eyes, goes from time to time to the fountain, draws water, and pours it on the heap of linen between the legs of the colossus. The liquid spurts up in a sheaf of dazzling jets, falls in a shower on the flagstones, and flows away in endless gleams of light.

The sun falls fully on the fountain. Under its ardent touch the moist tiles glitter like a casket of jewels, the water in the basin sparkles as though it were liquid gold.

The adolescent is resplendent in the glaring light; his red vest, over his dazzling white shirt, glitters under the caress of the sun, and from his fine bronzed bare arms drops of water slip, like so many diamonds.

Our entrance has neither surprised nor disturbed them. The work has not been interrupted for a single moment, the black washerman has not made one beat the less, the cadence of his monotonous cry has not been broken, his assistant has not ceased to pour out water at regular intervals, our presence does not even seem to have been noticed.

But, just as we are leaving, the youth casts upon us an enigmatical look, and then with a smile turns to the negro, who, without interrupting his operations, eyes us for a moment, and gives a bestial laugh, while his companion glances at Moses with withering contempt and addresses him in Arabic. The latter, suddenly losing all his self-possession, retires quickly, quite crestfallen, but as soon as he has got into the street he recovers his former audacity, and retaliates with a vile epithet in French, which he launches at his quondam hosts, and, shutting the gate violently, prudently takes refuge behind us. We reprimand him sharply, and give him strict injunctions to abstain, in our presence at least, from such intemperate language, or else we shall at once send him about his business. This alternative makes him turn grave, and he lags behind us with a sheepish air. But soon regaining his old effrontery, he takes the lead once more, protesting that he is going to show us a very curious sight, so we perforce must follow in his wake.

We reach ere long the bottom of a horrible blind alley. Dead bodies of animals, half buried in rank slime, are slowly putrefying. Dense vapours, too heavy to rise, hover over the ground, corroding the

walls, the bases of which, undermined by perpetual leaking, eaten by acrid and violent ferment, rotten by penetrating moisture, disaggregates, crumbling away bit by bit in viscous masses, leaving enormous gaps, that harbour noisome creatures.

The two side walls tower sheer aloft. Without doors, without windows, without a single opening of any kind, they rise, menacing, austere, gloomy, and their straight unbroken ridges cut in the sky above a dazzling square of blue. Not a sound, not a living being, nothing! Nothing but the slow, silent, eternal work of this putrefaction! We hesitate a moment whether to go on. The cold of this dungeon strikes us with a chill, we feel our hearts failing us in the midst of these abominable exhalations.

A door opens—a door so faded, so old, so worn, that it could not be distinguished from the wall. A white figure enveloped in a *haïk* appears and steps out, skirting the walls, gliding noiselessly. The spectre passes close by us, its eyes fixed, as if absorbed in a dream. The emaciated face has a livid complexion, the hands are as thin as a skeleton's. It vanishes at the corner of the street. We shudder when the walking corpse grazes us on its way. This phantom, wrapped in its winding-sheet, must surely be the spook that haunts these spots.

It is one of the customers, a haschich-smoker, Moses tells us; and continuing on a few steps in front, he enters the place that the mysterious figure has just left. He reappears almost immediately, and beckons us to follow.

We have to stoop in order to get through the doorway. We find ourselves in a narrow passage, damp and gloomy, then enter a low vaulted room with ogival arches resting on square pillars. A grey, diffused light from some source or other filters through a few apertures, dimly illuminating the centre of the room, leaving the other parts in an opaque shade. At the farther end a stove in a sort of alcove, cut in the thickness of the wall, throws faint red gleams on the bony head of an Arab. He is minding the fire, on which a copper coffee-pot simmers. A *mastaba* runs along the walls, hung with coloured mats. Similar covers are spread on the trodden earth-floor, and lanterns are suspended from the vaulted roof. In one corner there is in the shadow a group of

musicians, and in the middle of the room, Arabs lying, sitting, squatting, are smoking and drinking tea, coffee, and *raki*. Their slippers are ranged in a circle round them. A bluish vapour with a strong, pungent odour fills the room, and gathers up in a dense cloud underneath the ceiling.

There is in this Arab music something sweet, primitive, and savage, which deeply affects the mind. It is always that eternal repeating the same *motif*, always this slow rhythm, this plaint monotone, interrupted now and again by a sort of long, sharp, harrowing cry. It strangely grates upon you at first, as something abnormal, monstrous, and incomprehensible. But the anxiety produced by that unknown thing passes, your ear gets accustomed to the sounds, to the low measured echo of the *darabouks*, to the wails of the viol, to the rasping of the *gimbry*, and you are plunged into a state of profound peace, of intense repose, where the benumbed thought hovers between dream and reality. It is the very same feeling of soothing and rhythmic listlessness as is produced by the cadenced noise of the waves splashing on the shore, by the stampede of a troop of wild horses, by the incessant buzzing of myriads of insects on a warm summer's day. It is like a faded vision of events dimly seen in bygone years, an echo of far-off things once understood but now forgotten, of which our minds through ages should have retained a vague idea, and of which we should be vividly reminded by these artless, early, and barbarous sounds, as they touch unknown chords, and produce that unspeakable feeling so full of a strange savour, of such a sweet melancholy—the appeal of the past to the present.

They serve us with coffee. We watch with curiosity the group of smokers, waited on by a servant, who fills the pipes and lights them with a brand. An old grizzled Arab is rolled up in wool and muslin; he has a face of a greenish, waxen tinge. His hollow eyes, his dull look, have a fixed and icy expression; the pupil is largely dilated. A slight foam oozes from his half-parted lips, which move spasmodically. He strokes with his hand an effeminate figure seated at his side. The eyes of this delicate and pallid youth glare like carbuncles; he sways to and fro with a nervous, rapid movement, as he nestles with feline undulations to the

old man. Gradually a light flush appears on his livid cheeks, white foam fringes his discoloured lips, his eyes roll in their sockets, and a spasm shakes him from head to foot. With a piercing cry he suddenly throws himself back, and his head strikes the floor with a thud. Two Arabs lift him up. He is as rigid as a corpse. They lay him in a corner of the room, wipe his lips, bathe his temples, and throw a covering over his body. Two others lie at full length near him. His neighbour, a hideous negro with a bloated face and bloodshot eyes, starts up all at once as if impelled by a spring. With his arms pressed to his sides, his head bent forward, his mouth wide open, he begins one of those lewd, rude, savage dances peculiar to black people. With his naked foot he beats the ground, marking time violently with his heels. At the sight of him the orchestra, getting excited, emphasise the melody and play on in quicker time. The gestures of the Bacchanal become more rapid, his breathing heavier, his voice hoarser; and in the rumbling of the *darabouks*, the harrowing sounds of the *gimbry*, the laments of the viols, amid this acrid vapour which grows denser and denser, among these motionless smokers, these bodies stiff and stark stretched on the floor, the horrible creature continues his infernal dance.

A NEGRO DANCING.

Soon light froth gathers round his lips, his features shrivel up frightfully, and he pauses a moment, one second, his limbs absolutely rigid, without a tremor. Not a muscle moves, not a sigh escapes from his closed lips, not a breath comes from his swollen chest. He looks as if suddenly he had turned into a statue. By and by he returns to

life, moves once more, the music takes up a softer, calmer strain. His legs are tightly pressed together, and the upper part of the body remains still, only his hips sway with lascivious oscillations of a voluptuous slowness. The music accelerates the time, the movement of the hips is transformed into a strong trepidation of the lower limbs, strained by fierce convulsions. Abundant foam issues from his mouth, and his chest, streaming with perspiration, quivers with a hoarse rattle. All at once he rushes with a yell on an Arab, and the two roll on the ground in a horrible embrace, uttering wild imprecations, and panting furiously. We then hastily retreat, having no desire to witness the end of the performance.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIA

CAPE SPARTEL.

Gebeleh, 7th January.

We are going to set out to-day. Ever since the morning there has been a deafening hurry-scurry in conveying our luggage from the hotel to a narrow lane hard by, where it is piled up in huge loads on the backs of a dozen stubborn mules, which kick, bite, whinny, treading the while on the bare toes of the porters hard at work, and on our traps lying on the ground.

Now and again, when a savage blow takes the skin off their bones, or re-opens a half-healed wound, a painful shudder runs through their wretched frames, wrinkling their hardened and callous skin; and when a last bale, added to an incalculable number of other things, makes their lean backs crack and bends their sinewy legs under them, there comes from beneath these heavy unbalanced burdens, under which they almost disappear, a faint mournful moan, like a human wail of anguish.

The muleteers shout and jostle one another like lunatics. They dart in and out between the beasts and the strange medley of packages, receiving a kick from a bewildered horse, from a vicious mule a bite which tears off a bit of flesh along with a portion of the garment. Their bare feet are bruised by the hoofs of the animals and the falling of the imperfectly strapped boxes. Their hands are torn by the rough iron fastenings; the projecting nails graze off the skin of their bronzed arms streaked with long red gashes.

It is a deafening din, a fierce hullabaloo, with appeals of distress, piercing yells mingled with shouts of laughter. Sticks are brandished and come down with a sharp thud, bare black shining arms are despairingly tossed to and fro. Some of the boxes slip as they are hoisted up, only to fall again, are caught in their descent, and finally are corded on the packs in rough-and-ready fashion, by means of a marvellous profusion of old worn-out ropes and rotten leather thongs.

A ring of beggars encircles us, brushing us with their loathsome rags and importuning us with their piteous wails. Among these are blind men of fearful aspect, with bloodshot empty sockets; imbeciles eaten up with gangrene, with livid face and dull eyes; madmen with glaring orbs full of despair, muttering incessantly the name of Allah; crippled and maimed wretches, who display frightful ulcers and thrust hideous stumps from beneath the folds of their filthy burnooses.

This motley crowd of mendicants emits a nauseous, sickening odour. A handful of small coins, a few cuffs from Selim, and some forcible objurgations from Antonio at last widen the circle, and the arrival of the Kaïd, who tickles the shoulders of the refractory ones with a knotted thong, finally compels the unlucky wights to take to flight.

Gradually—it is impossible to say how—all this hubbub is hushed. From time to time, one of the beasts of burden, followed by its driver, emerges with difficulty from the confused mass. Another follows, then comes the last, closing our marching column; and all our camping stock, trunks, boxes and so forth, slowly disappear and wind out of the town.

It is our turn now. Selim is at hand with our mounts. Forestier seizes upon a big, stiff, sullen white mule. I get astride my own, a plucky little grey one of medium size, with a good-natured look about

her. Marshall's is grey also, but somewhat advanced in years and with sly eyes. To Brooks's share—the ineffable Brooks—falls a small black mule with mangy patches all over his coat. Antonio has got hold of a neat, spruce, coquettish little creature with a glossy coat, and perches himself briskly on the top of some rugs and two or three bags crammed full. In spite of this additional burden the sturdy little beast does not appear the least disconcerted. Ingram and Harris rejoice in horses. Carlton, a friend of Harris's, who was born in the country and speaks Arabic fluently, and who is to act as our interpreter, is absent from roll-call. He is to join us at our first camping-place.

A few of the guests at the hotel have been watching all the preparations for our departure. Some of them, who have just returned from the place where we are going, proffer their advice; others who are about to take the same route listen with ears wide open. We shake hands, bid each other good-bye, and away we start.

The cavalcade moves on: the Kaïd, muffled up in a blue hooded burnoose, leading the way with gun across his saddle-bows; Forestier, Marshall, and I in the centre; Ingram and Harris on the flanks. Antonio and Brooks bring up the rear. Don, since he no longer has Forestier's legs to take refuge under, plays pranks among the mules; while Rover, with a great calm and much dignity, trots behind his master's horse with his nose in the air. Mitza barks merrily as she frisks here and there.

We cross the *Souk*, following a sandy track lined by a double row of aloes, cactuses, palm-trees, skirted by villas, at the windows of which the heads of some inquisitive ones appear.

Ere long we pass the last villa. The bushy hedge is replaced by a few sparse shrubs with ever-widening spaces between them. The track is lost in the fields, the sand is changed into ploughed land, and our mules sink knee-deep in a yellow glutinous soil.

We cross streams deeply embedded between steep slippery banks; our mules stumble at every step, and with difficulty extricate themselves from this soft tenacious clay. You must keep a sharp look-out if you don't want to be pitched off and take a header into a layer of mud a couple of feet deep.

After great trouble in forcing on our unwilling mules, we cross the first and last bridge on the road to Mequinez over the Oued-al-Ihoudi with its bare steep banks, and we begin to climb the ascent of Cape Spartel, the Ampelusium of old.

There are no highways, no roads, only faint outlines of beaten tracks, where the ground seems a little more trodden than in other places, and which intersect one another in every way. We follow them for a short distance, then they disappear, reappear all at once, and when we strike into them again a little further on, they cross and recross, diverge, are lost, are found again in the most fantastic manner. The slope is stiff, the ground furrowed by brooks which softly ripple in every direction, and meander along between banks of myosotis, water-cress, anemones.

We follow the beds of these tiny streams with their endless zigzags. Sometimes our heads are on a level with the top of the banks, and we make our way along a deep and narrow gully formed by the encroachment of the water into the crumbling soil. Now the silvery streak runs almost on the surface of the ground, winding round a boulder and clearing a passage through a network of roots; now it hollows out its bed, bubbles over big white pebbles, widens into flower-decked little pools, and vanishes suddenly, no one knows where; then a few paces further it breaks into sight again, joined to another brook, from which it diverges ere long and rushes madly on, imparting a delicious freshness to the verdure on its banks.

The whole of the promontory from the base to the summit is nothing but one immense patch of green, broken with grey spots of bare rocks with dark and jagged peaks. Their sides, worn and polished by the wind and rain, are speckled with scabs of lichen, of faint yellow ochre, or of pale dull green. These neutral tints harmonise deliciously with the warm green, the soft violet colours, the hazy outlines of this dwarf vegetation looming in the distance, this vast fragrant carpet over which the rocks raise their massive forms.

Then there are cork-trees, dwarf palms, cherry-laurels, and here and there broad light violet belts of heather, extending as far as one can see across the hills.

The rose bay-trees lash our faces with their flexible boughs. The

soil under our feet is white with daisies; everywhere are gentians, periwinkles, wild marigolds, and on all sides violets fill the atmosphere with perfume, mingling their delicate odour with the keen breeze that blows from the sea.

With what an inward pleasure, what a robust feeling of satisfaction, we inhale deep breaths of this pure and vivifying air!

A SHEPHERD.

You yield to the subtle charm of this solitude, of these desert tracts. You feel, as it were, intoxicated by this wind, passing laden with wild scents of flowers, of plants, of moist earth. You complacently quaff these salubrious odours, these invigorating breaths that caress your cheeks, soothing your thoughts, bracing your nerves, imparting new elasticity to your muscles.

Downwards on my left, in a dip in the ground covered with heather, and commanded by a rocky mass, there is a flock of goats. They are small, with coats spotted white and black. Some are browsing, others are leaping on the sharp points with vertiginous agility, while two more are butting each other furiously. On the loftiest peak, the goatherd, a young Arab, half naked, leaning on a long crook, gazes, standing in clear outline in the dark background.

Near us passes an Arab with a huge bundle of wood on his shoulders. You cannot perceive his body, half hidden by the bushes, you only see the burden which sways to and fro, rising and falling with the unevenness of the road. An old woman follows him, carrying a large jar on her head and some bits of wood in a corner of her skirt. Her features are hard, her face is wrinkled, and her forehead tattooed with a blue cross. She pauses for a moment to watch us pass.

We now reach the crest of the plateau. From there the view is imposing. The immense Atlantic, of roseate blue, striated with broad bands of a glaucous green, stretches away unbounded. Not a sail, not a bird, not a living creature, nothing...the infinite, and to the horizon the blending of sky and water, emphasising still more the redoubtable impression of unlimited space. In the azure of a soft blue sky, with warm palish hues, the sun's red orb, like an enormous ruby, radiates in the splendour of its eternal majesty, kindling the ether with its endless rays of light. Ruddy gleams glide o'er the waters, sparkle on the rocks, flash in sheets of gold and purple on the gigantic cliff which seems as though carved in a colossal and resplendent block of bronze. From the depths below a hoarse unceasing roar resembling a Titan's complaining, rises like a dire menace, a challenge thrown to man's audacity to advance farther.

Behind us is unfolded the panorama of Tangier, shelving down to the sea, with its white houses, quite rosy now under the last gleams of the setting sun, and down below, far away, are the vapoury blue summits of the Djebel-Habib and of the mountains of Tetouan. On our left lie the straits studded with vessels, and the coast of Spain, of a soft violet tint, so pale, so light, so diaphanous, that it almost confounds with the skies.

The sea breaks on the rocks, six hundred feet below us. On the left, behind a clump of trees, the lighthouse comes in sight.

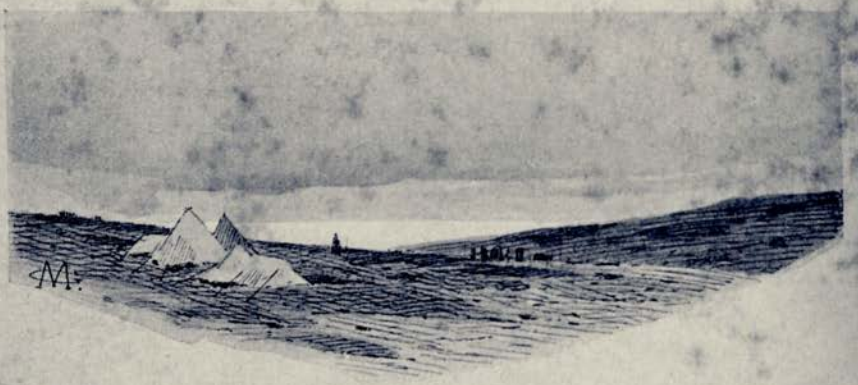
Half-way up the hill we find a path cut in the precipitous cliff. It winds in a slight declivity, broken, furrowed, and cut by streamlets, pools, and miry marshes. In some places a wide open gap leaves scarcely a foot of passage for our mules; it is a part of the road which, undermined by waters, gave way, and has slipped into the sea. From time to time you hear a dull rumble followed by prolonged echoes; it is the rolling of a loose rock, a landslip, the falling of an uprooted tree And all these are crumbling in the deep, engulfed in the voracious abyss that absorbs everything.

There is a great charm in this narrow track swept by the sea-breezes this tiny bridle-path lined with flowers, ferns, cork-trees, rose bay-trees cactuses, gum-trees, with its ever recurring glimpses of the Atlantic.

On arriving on the esplanade of the lighthouse, we overtake our

men, who have halted here for a short spell. They start again with Antonio and the Kaïd, while we enter the Moorish courtyard of the lighthouse, where we take coffee in the keeper's lodge. There we find the hotel guide, who is piloting some tourists. We shake hands, swallow our coffee, light our cigarettes, and mount our mules again. The wind has freshened; at the foot of the lighthouse the waves are dashing loudly against the shore.

The path has now disappeared. In descending the cliff, to go on the beach, we have to make our way over rocks, steep slopes, loose stones, muddy soil. The incline is so abrupt that my head almost touches the



OUR CAMP.

back of my mule. The slips are frequent; the beasts hesitate a long time before putting their feet on the ground, and stumble at every step. After running the risk of breaking our necks a hundred times, after prodigious feats in maintaining our equilibrium, and thanks to endless precautions, we ultimately reach the beach with all our limbs intact.

The evening draws on, the sky gets overcast, a storm is brewing, so, pressing on our beasts, we cross two or three fords, then turning sharply to the left we again climb the cliff along a gentle rise. A few drops of rain begin to fall, the clouds burst, the rain lashes our faces for a few minutes and then passes off. All at once from the top of a mound we see, less than fifty yards from us, in a hollow, our men preparing to pitch the tents. The mules, tethered, are munching their provender, while

the old Kaïd, Hadj Mohammed, is giving orders from his horse and rating his men. We are at the end of the first stage, at Gebeleh.

Two tents are already in position. A pole to which canvas is fastened rises, erected and kept in position by vigorous hands. The wind swells the canvas, which flaps against the mast with heavy thuds like a sail being set; the men draw the cords, bend the stuff, they fasten the halyards to the pegs driven into the soil, and here is one more tent pitched.

In a trice our little canvas town, quite white on the carpet of green grass, raises its pointed roofs, displaying like slender gossamer its network of cords which fasten it to the ground and protect it against the frolics of the wind.

Here is the tent occupied by Brooks and Antonio, the store-rooms, where the provisions and the kitchen utensils are already deposited. In front of it, in a hole in the earth about a foot square, a kettle simmers over a charcoal fire: that's our cooking range. Near there is the tent shared by Harris and Carlton, a tent of miniature size, with a double roof, a card folded in two. Everything is most scrupulously arranged inside. The floor is covered with a thick Smyrna carpet, on the bed is displayed a large cloak of black bear-skin.

A little farther off, alongside the row of mules, is the tent of irregular shape, occupied by our Arabs. The brown camel-hair rugs with black stripes which are thrown over the mules, to protect their loads from the rain, are used as mattresses by the men, while the pack-saddles serve them for pillows.

A pretty round tent of green waterproof material shelters Forestier, Ingram, Marshall, and myself. On the hooks round the centre pole hang our guns, our cartridge-bags, our hats, in fact everything that can be disposed of in that way. Near the pole stands a deal table, and on the table a lantern. On mats thrown on the ground, our beds are arranged in a circle, round the tent. They consist of stout canvas stretched on a wooden frame that can be taken to pieces. Ingram and Forestier are installed in the back of the tent, while Marshall and I are located on each side of the entrance.

Our trunks, portmanteaus, boxes, gun and cartridge cases, in short

all our traps, are collected there. They serve us in turns as seats, as tables, as a bulwark against the wind, and, when necessary, as wedges and props for our bedsteads. By the side of our couches there is a litter of bags, boots, shoes, slippers, sun-shades, easels, sketch-books, colour-boxes . . . .

The night is fine, the air balmy, almost sultry. In the distance the sea is lit by the moon. The Arabs are in their tent; you can hear their shouts, their laughter, their songs, and the shrill notes of the *gimbry*. There's a gleam of light shining from Antonio's tent. My companions slowly drop off to sleep one after the other. Before following their example, I leave the tent for a moment, to enjoy the view of the slumbering camp, under the starlit sky, lulled to rest by the far-off sounds from the sea.

All the noises have ceased, all the lights have been put out; a deep silence reigns everywhere. Across the opening of our tent the Kaïd is lying, his gun by his side, and his sabre within reach of his hand.

At last I slip into bed. A white woollen rug ornamented with red tufts serves me as a blanket; over that a folded carpet of Rabat coarse wool, with orange, lemon-coloured, and crude green stripes, protects me from the cool air. A waterproof bag containing clothes and linen does duty for a pillow. Rover is lying at my feet, his head resting on my couch. From the ground covered with flowers comes the sweet scent of thyme and of ferns, and I fall asleep with a feeling of unalloyed complacence, amid this tranquillity of the night, this pure air, these refreshing, untainted odours.

ALONG THE ATLANTIC SHORE.

In the Gharbiah, 8th January.

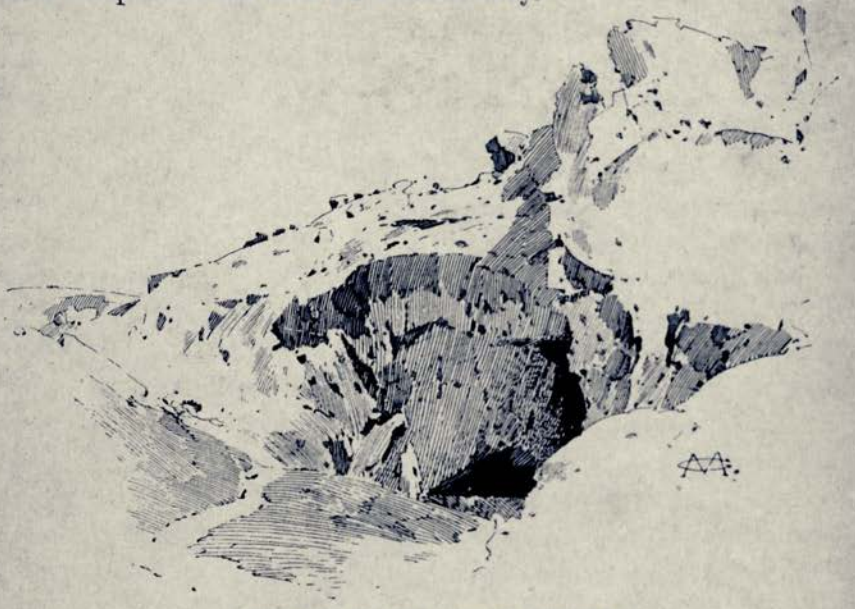
At seven o'clock we are awakened by the Kaïd. We quickly leap out of bed and dress in all haste. Before we have time to stretch our limbs, put on our boots, and strap our belts round our waists, our quarters are invaded with a tremendous din, pulled down, corded, borne off, and there we are left, in the midst of our beds and our baggage, to finish, under the open sky, the toilet we had begun under the tent.

A film of frost covers the stiff blades of grass. Ingram, buried under a heap of blankets, and closely encased in a voluminous fur cloak, first pokes his nose out, then his head, opens one eye, then the other, and scenting in the air some moist vapours, he suddenly divests himself of his hairy sheath, and rushes out stark naked, to the bewilderment of everybody. He had got wind of a spring close by, and guided by his infallible amphibious instinct, he darted a hundred yards away to a pool, about four feet square, plunged into it with glee, and, after dabbling about a moment, with grunts of intense satisfaction, he was coming

running back besmeared with mud from head to foot, but charmed with the unhoped-for luxury of a clean bath!

Ingram must certainly have had seals or wild ducks among his forefathers, and has doubtless succumbed to some irresistible suggestion, yielded to some imperious law of atavism.

Brooks brings the tea, which is served on a box. We have scarcely drained our last cup and crunched our last biscuit ere our makeshift table and portmanteau seats are whisked away.



ENTRANCE TO THE CAVES OF HERCULES.

Everything has been folded, rolled up, and packed with straps, cords, and ropes, amid recriminations and disputing, and away the baggage goes on the backs of the mules down towards the beach, while we set out to visit the Caves of Hercules a few yards off.

Following a pretty sandy path winding amid groves of cork-trees, beds of thyme and asphodels, we arrive in about twenty minutes at the solid ground in front of the grottoes. The entrance is narrow and low. You are obliged to stoop to get in, and you proceed along a roughly inclining passage cut in the rock, which leads into the interior.

A few wretched-looking Arabs in rags are moving silently about like spectres. They earn their living by cutting millstones. The effect produced by the innumerable round holes formed by the extraction of the stones is very odd, and gives the cavern a somewhat fantastic appearance.

From the wide gap opening on the Atlantic, like a formidable framework of stone, you perceive the dazzling mass of waters; and in the gulf beneath monstrous billows surge, raised with a terrific force, rushing on the rock, on which they break with a sinister crash, recoiling in sprays of foam. And each time the cliff trembles, shaken to its very foundations.

THE CAVES OF HERCULES.

And it will be ever thus; always in the black shadows of night, the white mists of dawn, in the fierce brightness of noon-tide, the faint haze of twilight; amid the raging storms and profound calm; at every moment, at every hour, incessantly, for ever! the restless sea, with its tenacious rancours, will wage its inexorable war, uttering its fearful wail, giving vent to its mad fury, ceaselessly undermining the rock, until the day when, sapped at its base, the gigantic stones must fall vanquished into the abyss!

We reach the beach down the cliff. The descent is dangerous, along the almost perpendicular slope, through sharp ridges, cactuses, inextricable network of bushes and roots, over soil giving way under the feet of the mules.

At length we are down below on the sands. The shore seems to

stretch away to an endless distance, and we look like very pigmies. The sea, so powerfully majestic from the top of the cliff, loses suddenly its commanding amplitude, and seems surprisingly dwindled, when seen from this spot. Besides, the aspect of the landscape has completely changed. On our right are low-lying downs, covered with dwarf palms. At their foot, in downward lands, a series of pools lie in a long string parallel with the sea. In trying to cross these stagnant waters to get on the sand-hills I nearly disappeared in the quicksand, together with my mule, who already had sunk in above the knees, and it was with great difficulty that I succeeded in extricating myself from those treacherous waters.

Far in front of us the caravan proceeds slowly, led by the Kaïd. On the yellow sands, glittering in the sun, it looks like a huge saurian laboriously moving under its carapace. We stop a moment at the foot of the sand-hills, dismount and partake of a light lunch, hard-boiled eggs, sandwiches, and potted meat, washed down with a glass of whisky. Ingram and Marshall leave their beasts to Selim, who is in attendance. He remains with Forestier and I, careering about on Ingram's horse, and they set off to shoot across the hills, but keeping in sight of the caravan. Djebel-Tarik, one of the muleteers, goes with them, beating the bushes and showing them the way.

Carlton, who joined us last evening, engages in mad races with Harris, and when, swift as the wind, they rush headlong past us, our sleepy mules awake with a start, and, seized with fright, dash right and left, galloping furiously after the two centaurs, only alas! to come to a dead halt, at the end of a few minutes, and then to indemnify themselves, for this unwonted speed, by an exasperatingly slow pace.

Towards two o'clock we rejoin the caravan which has halted on the banks of the Tsaha Dartz. The two Nimrods are already there. Ingram, rather crestfallen, has returned with an empty bag; Marshall has shot a plover. That's not much for a beginning.

The sky has become overcast; the sea has assumed a leaden hue. The yellow waters of the river ripple under the lash of the wind which is blowing right against the current. To cross the stream there are two

old shaky boats; it is in these that we are going to convey to the opposite bank men, beasts, and baggage.

The mules are unloaded. The men pile in the skiffs all that can get into them, and even more. Ingram, Harris, and I leap into one. We wedge ourselves where we can, between the boxes, the trunks, the bags, the tent canvas, all of which have been heaped up pell-mell. The tottering mass threatens every moment to topple over, and to give us a ducking in the muddy water. Two Arabs, the ferrymen, row vigorously, but still keeping up on water a squabble they had begun on *terra firma*. They will continue it when they recross the stream, and won't leave off until their parched throats prevent them from uttering one word more.

We have to contend with a surge, with eddies, and a strong current towards the open sea. The water flows every moment over the gunwales, which are on a level with the stream. Don and Rover swim after the boats. A brusque movement on our part, an attempt of the dogs to get on board, a clumsy stroke of the rowers, would have capsized us at once. A few yards from the shore the boat strikes, bumping the ground heavily, which prevents our foundering, and we land, up to our knees in water. The other old tub, with Forestier, Marshall, and Brooks, comes safe to land likewise, not without difficulty. Two good hours are spent in getting the rest of the baggage and the men over the stream, the mules swimming across fastened to the stern of the boats. This transport is made in the midst of incessant bawling, scuffling, and wrangling between the ferrymen and the passengers. In order to escape this uproar, Forestier and I take our guns, and we bend our steps, on the look-out for game, towards our next camp. A fine thick rain is falling.

From the top of a hill which we have just climbed, after vainly beating for game, we catch sight of our tents, pitched half-way down.

The sky clears a little. We make our way across the plateau. At the top of the highest hillock is a little lone house; Arabs are crouching against the walls. They rise at our approach, and our guns, which they examine attentively, seem to interest them far more than we do. Through the open door we glance into the interior. It is the school of the village, whose houses and tents are studded on the other side of the hill on which our camp is pitched. In the semi-darkness we

descry about a dozen lads between six and ten years of age, sitting with their legs crossed, and their tablets on their knees. Some are placed back to back; others are facing the wall, which they almost touch with their foreheads; the rest are squatting at random on the floor. They wobble like little bears, and recite in a nasal tone some verses from the Koran. In one of the corners of the room you infer rather than see that the schoolmaster is ensconced, an old man with a white beard. Armed with a long rod, he deals out summary justice to those who, lulled by their pendulous movements, have fallen asleep over their tablets, or to the irrepressible pupils who are interrupting the lesson by their chatter.

Since our indiscreet curiosity seems to embarrass the venerable teacher, we betake ourselves off, followed by our bronzed bodyguard, who keep close up with us, and never take their eyes off our guns. I explain the mechanism to them, and their surprise becomes sheer stupefaction. A vulture is whirling within shot. I bring it down, and while I am picking it up, they seize upon the copper socket which has fallen on the ground. They are now less inclined than ever to leave us, anxiously waiting with boyish anxiety for other shots to be fired, so that they may snatch up more spent cartridges.

Not far off, on a block of masonry, an uncovered square enclosure, about three or four feet high, strips of white stuff are floating from sticks fixed in the centre of the square. It is the tomb of a worthy saint, and the pious Mussulmans deposit their offerings there as they pass.

A little farther away are cottages and huts with grey thatched roofs, and lower down on the slope, towards the sea, the sombre-looking tents of the nomads, with yellow and black stripes. Stunted trees, scorched by the sun and shrivelled by the dry winds, break here and there the monotonous undulations of the hills.

The view from where we stand extends to a great distance. Big grey clouds crawl on amid the neutral tints of a violet-hued sky laden with rain. In the foreground at our feet, on the flank of the hill, our camp is nearly completed. A light bluish spiral smoke twisted by the wind rises from the camp-fire, very transparent against the heavy sky. Mules with their harness on are rolling about, braying with all their

might; others are taking to flight, flinging, and getting rid of their troublesome pack-saddles. And there are cries, shouts, yells, mingled with the snorting of frightened horses. Muleteers are kicking, to force them to get up, mules wallowing on the grass; some are pursuing the fugitives; burnooses float in the air; bronzed arms and legs struggle about in the midst of a collection of white stuffs, lighted here and there by the scarlet spot of a fez, a patch of mauve, or a strip of an amaranth-coloured vest. Then calm is once again restored; the last boxes are stored, and the installation of the camp is completed. The Arabs creep under their *gourbi;* everything is under shelter except Brooks.

ESTUARY OF THE TSAḤA-DARTZ.

With his dull, thin silhouette, as melancholy as a drenched bird, he weaves in and out like a shuttle, between our tent and the kitchen, dressing the table, serving the tea, stumbling over the dwarf palms, getting entangled in the tent-ropes. On your ears fall Ingram's wrathful tones. Bent on reducing his valet's ideas to something like order, he but only succeeds in making him lose his head entirely, while Marshall's squeaky voice, like that of a talking doll, vainly implores the echoes for news of his Mary Ann.

At the base of the hill, a large plain stretches in a gentle incline down to the shore, covered with brushwoods of palms, cork-trees, and ferns of crude green, where gleam with a metallic sheen, narrow plashes, tortuous ridges of water, and numerous streams flowing to the sea, and fertilising all this vegetation. Russet cows stud with tawny tints this

green expanse. On the right, a lake, the estuary of the Tsaha-Dartz, is ensconced far in the land, reflecting the leaden hues of the sky. The margin is cut up into a multitude of capes, points, headlands, promontories.

Flat narrow tongues of land seem like so many gigantic sword-blades stretched out on the water, and thousands of aquatic birds disport themselves on the lustreless waters, conceal themselves in the reeds of the shore, or soar away in great flights with loud rustles of wings. On the left, in rough contrast to this carpet of emerald green, the white wastes of the beach extend far in the distance, and at the very end of it is Cape Spartel, with the bright column of its lighthouse and farther on the sea, a sea of molten lead.

The rain begins again to fall. We go in our tent and sit down to tea. The water pours down in torrents, the wind also comes heavily into play, and in the night increases to a regular hurricane.

The villagers who have been called upon by the Kaïd to watch over us during the night, face without flinching the downpour in which they will have to mount guard until to-morrow morning. Poor people! you hear them shouting to one another in order to keep themselves awake. The rain and the hail rattle on the outstretched canvas. The water invades our dwelling, runs in countless rills over the bare ground in the tent, and drops trickling down through the stuff full on our heads. A permeating moisture emanates from every quarter; the wind comes whistling through every cranny, the place becomes bitterly cold, we take refuge under our blankets.

Our shaking tent oscillates under the repeated blasts. I hear the Kaïd hailing our men, their heavy tramp, the din of confused voices, and the thuds of hammers driving in the loosened tent-pegs. Then these noises die away; the drenched ropes grow tense, the canvas becomes stiff, the tiny streams that flow under our beds and among our luggage dry up, and I fall to sleep, lulled to rest by the roar of the raging storm.

* * * * * *

To-day we take it easy, and sleep through the best part of the morning. The weather has cleared up; white clouds are scudding along like thin muslins o'er a moisty blue sky. From time to time the

sun pierces through a cloud, and under the pale golden gleam of its rays the green glistens, vapours rise from the heated soil, the tiny drops suspended from the edges of the leaves like so many diamonds slowly evaporate, absorbed by the sun, dried by the wind. The bushes' over-taxed boughs resume their elasticity and airy shapes, and their leaves flutter in the breeze with a soft and prolonged rustle. The refreshed flowers give forth stronger odours, the bees ensconced in the calyxes get intoxicated with the nectar of the sweet petals, and in the cool fragrant air myriads of little winged creatures, mad with life, and eager for the sun, swarm, whirling with endless buzzings.

THE LAKES.

Ingram, Carlton, and Harris are gone shooting. Forestier is sketching; Marshall and I, with our guns slung across our shoulders, wend our way towards the lake. We trudge knee-deep in the marshy soil that lines the banks. We can scarcely get within a couple of gunshots of the creeks, where vast numbers of water-hens, snipe, ducks are noisily playing. In the distance a few eyots are literally covered with flamingoes, looking like long rose and white veils spread on the lake.

We tear ourselves away from this Tantalus feast, and as a last shift we climb the hill again in the direction of the village, bringing down a few larks as they rise on our way.

A dry sandy road winds on between fields of clover and barley. A peasant with a hoe on his shoulder crosses our path; a woman comes

with a basket of eggs, and a coop of fowls; then a bigwig of the neighbourhood, with his son astride before him on his mule, a fine mule, all decked with mauve velvet embroidered with gold; two female slaves, bent almost double beneath their loads, follow behind the mule. This little road is lively enough, and appears well-frequented.

These people glance at us with a smile, but with very little surprise. It is impossible, in these big, unfathomable eyes, uniformly dark, in the calmly polite or coldly indifferent expression of these bronze features, to get any clue to the nature of any sentiments whatsoever. Have they any fellow-feeling for us? do they hate us? or do they regard us simply as mere passers-by? You cannot detect the least sign beneath the impassible mask on these sombre faces, on these impenetrable features, which baffle us like undefinable enigmas.

Here is the village, some thirty square huts with thatched roofs. They branch off at a venture in every direction, built at haphazard here and there, according to the caprices of the land or the whim of the owner. They are nearly all of the same pattern—stone or earth walls, with mud instead of mortar, and a thatched roof, consolidated by trellis work, fixed on its exterior surface. A low door gives access to the interior, and a hole fashioned in the wall serves as a window. A thorn or cactus hedge surrounds the house and protects it more effectively than a stone wall. A pretty deep ditch, which serves as an outlet for the rain water—and as a sewer—is dug all along the hedge outside.

Near the houses are tumble-down conical ricks of straw, that dry in the sun, rot in the rain. Primitive ploughs, that look as if they dated from the Creation, are on the ground amid heaps of refuse. Near some putrefied carcases, exhaling horrible odours, packs of surly dogs, with rough coats and blood-red sores, are disputing this prey, the while barking hoarsely, with a host of hawks and vultures.

Close by, a mangy, worn-out ass, with scarcely a breath left in him, is lying on a heap of refuse, and the winged pirates and carrion crew are already whirling above him in narrower and narrower circles, as if they were bent on devouring him alive.

There are fowls picking up grains of corn, pigeons swooping noisily, flights of shrieking birds, and on the gables of the grey roofs, completely

covered with moss and lichen, silent storks with one leg bent, their beaks buried under the down of their wings, assist motionless and disdainful at these disgusting feasts, these uproarious contests.

Here are the tents now, the tents of camel-hair, low, black, looking like mountain peaks seen in the distance. The thick, rough stuff, supported inside by stakes of unequal length driven into the ground, bends with an irregularly undulating appearance, and the tops of the stakes make the heavy covering bulge strongly, threatening to slit it at every moment. Coarse pieces of cloth, strips of old mats, are over the parts worn through by the rain, wind, inclemency of weather. The whole structure has been rent by last night's squall, and reeks with thick damp fumes.

On the thorn bushes, which guard the approach, tattered pieces of stuff and patched burnooses are laid out to dry, while ugly black creatures clad in filthy grey rags are busy in the enclosure, amid the broken remains of pots, of pitchers, with which the soil is strewn. Tiny, spindle-legged, knock-kneed children, full of vermin, with pot-bellies, bleared eyes, roll in the mud and dirt, of which they rise horribly besmeared. With precocious perversity, in order to amuse, they exert themselves unto belabouring with bundles of thorny twigs the nose and eyes of a wretched, rawboned goat tethered to a stake, and the poor beast tugging at the rope is almost strangled in its desperate efforts to escape its tormentors.

Ingram, Carlton, and Harris, more fortunate than we were, have shot a dozen partridges; and as the village people have brought us the *mouna*, milk, butter, flat loaves, fowls, and a huge dish of *kouskoussou*, we shan't die of hunger to-day.

It rained so hard last night that the rivers have overflowed their banks. We shall stay here until to-morrow, so that the waters may subside and the fords be passable.

An Arab has just offered us a sheep. Accompanied by his wife and his child, he approached Ingram in a suppliant manner, and with tears in their eyes they all three kissed his hands, placing them afterwards on their breasts and foreheads, imploring him to use his influence with the Sheik of Arzilah to obtain the pardon of his eldest son.

It appears that the latter had chased a camel that had made its way into his garden. The animal in its flight had knocked down and injured a woman, and the owner of the garden had been held responsible for the accident and sent to prison.

Ingram promises the wretched parents to do what he can to get their son set free, and they withdraw, kissing his hands, overwhelming him with thanks, assuring him of their eternal gratitude.

During this scene the Kaïd had made all speed to slaughter and cut up the propitiatory victim, and naturally, to appropriate the skin, which he stretched on the ground to dry, fastening it with pegs round the edges.

The afternoon is magnificent, and we all resign ourselves to sweet indolence. Our Arabs have flocked together under their tent, and spend the time singing, smoking *kif*, playing the *gimbry*, and quaffing innumerable cups of tea and coffee. Hádj Mohammed, sitting on a box before the crackling fire, is drying his multivarious burnooses. From time to time he enters the tent, ferrets about, smelling the tins of preserves, and as soon as Brooks has turned his back he prigs a biscuit, slips a lump of sugar—of which he is very fond—into his pocket, and laps, "rubis sur l'ongle," the drops of chartreuse and whisky left in the glasses.

Brooks, who cannot bear the old soldier, and distrusts him, throws irate glances at him and lavishes upon him, in English, choice epithets, anything but flattering. To these ungracious reflections, the representative of the Sultan replies, in Arabic, with the utmost artless innocence, accompanying his emphatic protestations with the most suave and courteous gestures, which fail, however, to dupe our "chef," and only serve to augment his distrust of the too obsequious son of the Prophet. We get a full view of this little comedy, and we are highly amused by it. Antonio is helping Brooks in smoking cigarettes.

Harris, in order to kill time, spends hours in combing his horse's tail, plaiting its mane, while Selim almost wears the beast's coat out by dint of grooming it.

Ingram, stretched full length on his couch, wrapped up in his bearskin, is indulging in prolonged siestas. His bath yesterday

has procured him a nice attack of bronchitis, and he is coughing incessantly.

Forestier is making studies of mules, on which I gaze admiringly as I smoke my pipe. Carlton is playing tricks on the Kaïd, who is a very goodnatured fellow at bottom, wrestles with him, floors him, and once he is down, rolls him like a bale of linen, amidst the laughter of the bystanders, in which his victim is first to join.

A few starving dogs prowl round the camp, impudently snatching bones under the very nose of Don and Rover, who view their presence with deep dissatisfaction, and growl with bristling coats when they come too near. A number of vultures keep circling aloft, with eyes intently fixed on the fragments from the table. One of them, alighting all of a sudden, was daring enough to pick up from between the paws of Don a scrap of meat that he was on the point of devouring.

Ever since the morning groups of Arabs, sitting at the top of the hill, smoke cigarettes, and keep a diligent watch on all our movements.

We take a stroll on the beach, which we find quite deserted. On our return to the camp a supply of oats is just brought in for the beasts, who give loud neighs of delight at the smell of it. After pouring it in a large *koufa*, the Kaïd proceeds to apportion it: five double handfuls for each mule. The men receive the rations in a bag, in a piece of matting, or simply in a corner of their burnooses. They manage again to find some occasion for quarrelling about the division of the fodder.

After tea, Forestier, who is quite as clever a musician as he is an artist, took up his violin and played a great part of the evening. The Arabs kept listening to him, and we were rather curious to know what was the impression that European music had made upon them. Selim on being questioned replies that with time and application Forestier will certainly be able to play the *gimbry* as well as an Arab. Our friend expresses the very great pleasure he feels on hearing that perchance, one day, he will succeed in playing this melodious instrument with a fair amount of skill, and Selim complacently adds that the

consummate virtuoso, who fills their leisure hours with delight, will be surely pleased to give him a few lessons and to unveil the mysteries of Arabic music, for which Forestier assures him that he is profoundly grateful.

ARZILAH.

Arzilah, 10th January.

At eleven o'clock this morning, under a radiant sky, we struck our tents. We follow the beach for a few minutes, then, betaking ourselves to *terra firma* again, we attain the summit of a promontory where we halt near some Roman ruins. At the base of the hill the river Ghreefa flows into the sea. We have to wait until the tide ebbs still further, in order to get across. On the opposite bank, a number of people are waiting with the same object.

Carlton and Harris set out to reconnoitre and have a look at the strangers. An Arab first advances, feeling his way with a pole; they then follow and wade across, with the waters reaching to the saddles.

From here we get a full view of the surrounding landscape. Straight away in front of us Arzilah in the far off lies glistening in the sun, and at our feet the river ripples with gleams, and its metallic tones come out in strong contrast to the glowing yellow of the sand across which the river, after a sharp turn, pours its waters into the sea. On the left, edged by high perpendicular cliffs crowned with houses here and there, stretches a succession of marshes and lagoons, through which the Ghreefa winds with endless turns and twists.

Carlton returns, leaving Harris behind with the people of the other

caravan, with whom he happens to be acquainted, and also Ingram, who accompanied him. An Arab brings back their horses, which we mount, and we ford the stream in turns. The mules and the baggage will be brought over when the sea has ebbed enough. We greet the strangers, to whom Harris introduces us: a burly Englishman with a red face and yellow hair, a type of his race; his wife, a charming young blonde; and his companion, a Spaniard with an olive complexion. We partake of a light lunch while waiting for the rest of the caravan. Harris chats with the friends whom chance has sent across his path, and plays the cavalier to the young wife.

When the last mule has passed over, we take leave of the travellers and continue our journey. Harris and Carlton begin again on the beach their scratch races. Ingram follows their example. The sumpter mules fly off in every direction, the muleteers set up a clamour, and there is a regular stampede. The mules on which we are riding, infected by the general example, prick their ears, lower their heads, and indulge in all sorts of fancy tricks, which are a sad menace to our equilibrium. Forestier keeps his eyes well open, and firmly grips the saddle with his knees. This morning the girth of his mule broke during a gallop, and he was deposited on the sand, happily unhurt, while his lightened steed scampered off at the top of his speed and was caught with some difficulty by Harris and Carlton, who had set off in pursuit.

We are getting near Arzilah: you can now distinguish its crenelated walls. Making our way in front of the main body of the caravan, we gallop after the horsemen, who had started before us, at full speed, and arrive after half-an-hour's mad race at the foot of the town ramparts.

While the tents are being put up, Ingram and Marshall run out in quest of game. Harris, Forestier, and I pay a visit to Arzilah, the Zelia of the Carthaginians, who were the first to establish factories there; then the Constantia Zelis of the Romans, captured by the Goths, destroyed by the English, rebuilt by Abd-er-Rhaman, Caliph of Cordova, afterwards taken and fortified by the Portuguese, and finally fallen under the power of the Moors.

Surrounded by the still imposing zone of its old, ruinous grey ramparts, covered with lichen that preys upon them, the ancient town, so often captured and recaptured, is quietly dying away in the proud sepulchre of its lofty decaying walls, corroded at the base, its embattled summits crowned with plants and bushes, perforated with wide gaps, split with deep fissures, the haunt of vipers and the abode of beasts of prey. About fifteen hundred Moors and Jews give a semblance of animation to the place, and carry on some slight traffic, which decreases every day. The time is not very far distant when the vultures will hover about the crumbled towers, when the yelping of the jackals will fill the silence of its ruins, when the dwarf palms will strike root where its white terraces were standing, and the herdsman will drive his goats to browse where the high walls raised their menacing fronts. And he will crush beneath his bare feet the stalks of wild flowers, unconscious of the fact that a dead town is lying there, under the soil which he is treading, that his ancestors lived there, and Nature, in her slow and ceaseless toil, will have retaken from man what man has wrested from her.

ARZILAH.

We take coffee with the English consul, a cunning son of Israel, most affable and polite to excess, one of Harris's numerous acquaintances; then we stroll about the town.

What pestilent streets! a black sewer full of foul things emitting abominable smells, running along dilapidated walls, hideous shops, with pendant, dislocated weather-boards. We tack along the walls, clinging

to the fastenings of the shops, to every projection and cavity, wherever we can get any support, in order to avoid coming into contact with this horrible filth. As we thus proceed, in single file, along the goats' track, we have now and then to make some trying dead halts, when coming face to face with a pedestrian from the opposite direction. We glare at him and he at us, with suppressed rage, and obstinately cling to the wall, anxiously waiting till the one who is in the greatest hurry, shall take the outer side, and, with the utmost precaution, skirt round the other, running the risk of being stretched his full length in this putrefaction. It generally happened that *we* were the most eager to get on, and we thought ourselves very lucky if at such critical junctures a passing mule or a prancing horse didn't splash us from head to foot with this black and fetid mud.

It is incredible what things there are in this street, in this canal rather, this "cloaca maxima!" . . . . and all the streets in Arzilah are like this, and all the streets in the towns in Morocco are like those of Arzilah, and all the towns in the East are like the towns in Morocco. What don't you find there! carcases, vegetable refuse, animal ordure, old rags, loathsome pallets swarming with vermin, broken furniture, disjointed cages, blocks of stone. It is, in fact, the "tout à l'égout" in the strictest sense of the word.

And these things will remain there for days, months, years, until the wood rots, the vegetables putrefy and return to the soil, until the shreds torn from the carcases shall disappear in the maws of the vultures. And when the broiling sun will have dried up these marshes, calcinated these bones, what remains will turn to dust under the hoofs of mules and the tramp of human feet.

Then other carrion will fill the road, other stinking lakes with reeks and refuse will be formed in the rainy seasons, and the sun and the birds of prey will again begin their work, will clean these Augean stables. And it will be ever thus as long as the East will be in the hands of the Orientals.

We turn into lateral lanes, which lead, after endless windings, to the ramparts. The view of the sea is resting to our eyes after these loathsome sights, and the fresh breeze soothes our fainting hearts.

Women, coming out of kennel-like hovels, draw back at once, terrified at the sight of us, and disappear indoors, shouting and shaking their fists at us.

Through the crevices of the worm-eaten doors we see on bastions, invaded by brambles, old rusty cannon lying buried in the grass, others lopsided on broken-down carriages, cast-iron balls coated with tar scattered over the ground. The Sultan's artillery makes a good show, indeed, and is kept in a nice condition!

A crowd of funny little bronzed urchins follow us at a distance with malicious curiosity. As good little Mussulmans, they treat us like dogs of Christians, and some throw stones at us, which fall short of their mark.

Some lean cats with bristling russet coats jump into the plashes, pursued by half-naked lads, and disappear into some wide-mouthed holes.

Dirty Jews with smooth, glossy hair, black skull-caps fastened on by a check handkerchief, brush by us with squinting eyes, clad in their ragged, patched robes of faded blue, and a musty smell escapes from under those sordid tatters.

A donkey bars our way. It is all skin and bone, and is gazing sadly into space, his head resting on the parapet of the wall with an expression of suffering and indelible melancholy. At every spot where the bones bulge the skin is cut, and swarms of flies settle on the naked flesh. Long wheals, destitute of hair, mark the place of old closed sores, and the body is furrowed with them.

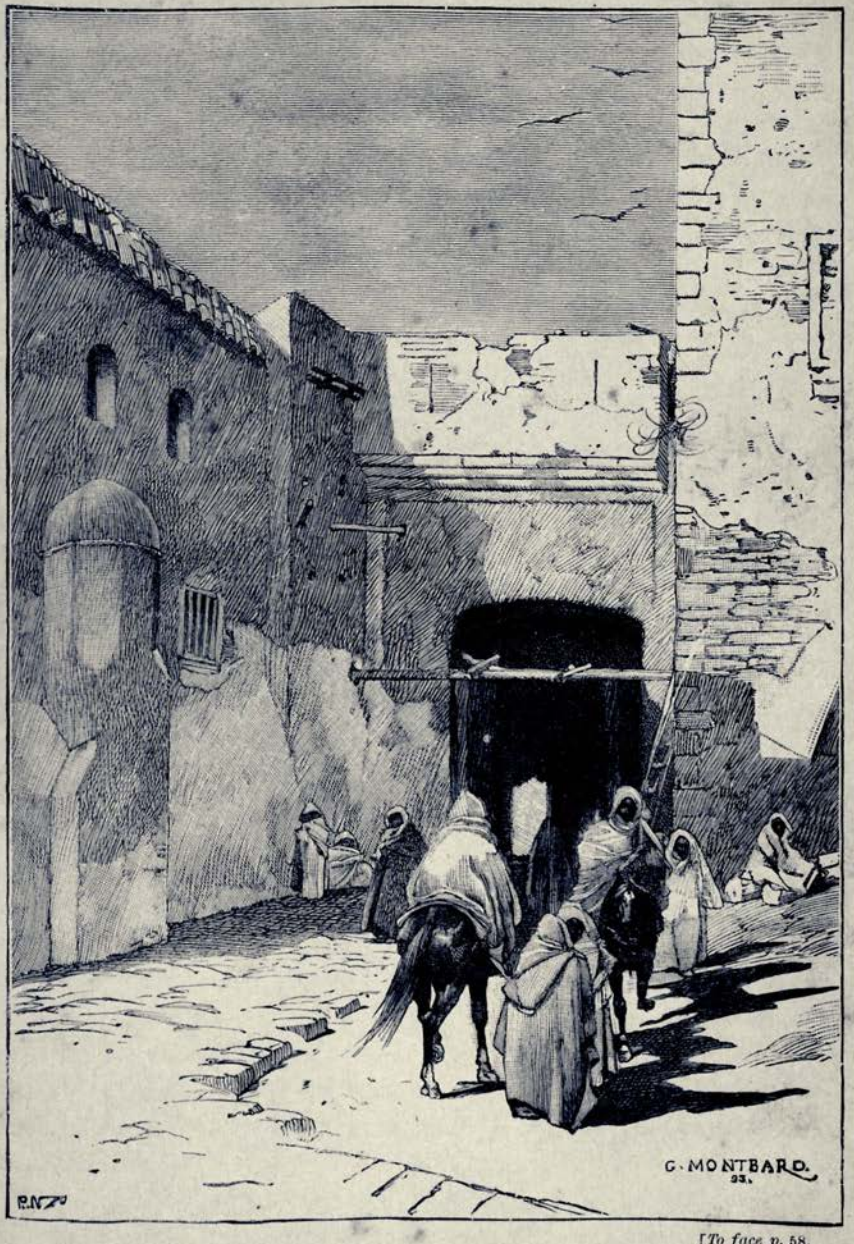
Poor creature! That is the reward you get for your long and hard services—blows, that only cease to rain on your miserable back when your master's hand is so fatigued that it falls inert at his side; your skin hardened, tanned, and chapped by the wind, the sun, and the rains; your body littered with scars. And when your old, worn-out spine cracks under the burden, when your withered legs will bend in two, when your breath fails you, and you will fall bruised, exhausted, dying, still toiling, then, to help you to rise, the Arab, ruthless and pitiless, will cudgel you with might and main, and your distended belly will resound from the blows like a drum, and the stick will break on

your hardened bones; and when he will see that the end has come, that you have fallen for the last time, that your lustreless eye is already gazing into the beyond, then with a curse he will leave you to your fate, and the birds of the air will finish what he has begun, and you will return to non-existence from which wayward destiny drew you. And not one caress will have soothed the bitterness of your dolorous martyrdom; never your limbs, tired out by hard toil, will have found rest on a fresh

A KHOUBA.

litter; never, after a long day's journey, your empty stomach will have enjoyed the luxury of a little nourishment; and instead of a quiet corner to die in peace, your master, the hard-hearted, the implacable Semite, will leave you to expire on the stony road, and while the death-rattle is in your throat, the falcons will pluck your eyes from their orbits, the jackals will tear your quivering flesh, the noisome vermin will crawl into your body before it has grown cold!

Before leaving the town I sketch the gate by which we entered. It now forms a mere aperture, for the stonework has been attacked and destroyed on all sides. Not a single angle is left, the fine ogive in the form of a horseshoe is now nothing but a shapeless



[*To face p.* 58.

THE ENTRANCE GATE OF ARZILAH.

curve notched all over; the two enormous leaves of the oaken folding door covered with grey dust and dried mud, are all jagged and indented at the bottom.

Above the gateway, the higher portion of the wall, in which two loopholes are cut, projects in corbelling. A stream of clear water, that comes from a spring near me, flows in fresh sheets, in numerous rills over the pavement, passes under the arch, and on the other side is lost to sight in the sand.

A host of urchins at once form a circle round us, then a ring of men and a few curious women, who have joined the group to see what the Roumi is doing. Now and again I drive off the nearest, who cramp my movements, and they draw back, smiling. Those who are standing next to me point to my sketch, and then to the gate with explanations, comments and gesticulations that never come to an end.

The crowd increases, the new-comers gradually push the others forward, until they come close upon me. I feel their breath pass over my neck, and a sultry glow, an odour "sui generis," is emitted by all these bodies pressed one against the other. Before me there is a surge of pointed hoods and tiny tanned skulls, with frisky tufts of hair, stirring about with the twitching movements like those of monkeys. I feel a creeping sensation all over my body. Some black thing has just alighted, with a click, on the vellum of my sketch-book. Oh horror! it is a flea, a Mussulman flea, a circumcised flea, fat, plump, shining, accustomed to good cheer, a flea of the period before the *Rhamadan*, who, curious to get a near view of a Nazarene, has leaped down from a tuft of hair close by. With the point of my pencil I am making all haste to delicately transfer this well-meaning visitor to its owner, when a second appears on the scene, then a third, then others, then hundreds, whole squadrons, who come pattering on the paper like hail. My sketch has disappeared under the black battalions. Rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, I hastily give my album a good shake, scattering at haphazard the unwelcome guests on the tufty skulls, on the white hoods, it doesn't matter where, and making our way through the crowd we reach the camp with alacrity, leaving these over-inquisitive parasites to the task of returning to their respective abodes.

Our camp is pitched near the *khouba* of a venerable *marabout*, between the ramparts of the town and the sea, whose billows break on the shore, two hundred yards from our tents. I have never met with anything so fresh and so gracefully picturesque as this *khouba*.

The sun was then very low on the horizon and slowly sinking in the sea. Its last gleams lined with a thin purple thread the summits of the lofty towers of Arzilah, whose sombre masses of greyish blue, shaded with mauve, stood out in strong outline, against an opal sky, over which were floating light clouds of a soft rosy hue, bordered with silver.

OUR CAMP IN VIEW OF ARZILAH.

In contrast to this soft harmonious background rose the elegantly shaped cupola surmounting the mausoleum, with its lurid reflections and clumps of foliage.

And among the tamarisks with their dusty leaves, the slender palm-trees, the long supple reeds, you had a glimpse of a corner of a roof covered with green tiles, an end of a decayed wall with charming carved interlaced ornaments. Through networks of plants, tangled masses of shrubs, you saw in a white wall, clothed all over with moss, wreathed with bindweed, roses, jessamine, an ogival door exquisitely curved and ornamented with marvellous arabesques. From the door a flight of steps was lost below in clusters of tall red gladioles, rows of violet iris, periwinkles. On the top step a *santon*, draped in his burnoose,

upright, motionless, austere, was turning the beads of his rosary. Between this oasis and the beach, limpid streams were flowing in their sandy beds, through fields of rushes and alfa which were washed by the waves at high tide.

The sportsmen returned jaded when twilight began to set in. The day has not been propitious. They have bagged only eight partridges. The dogs can hardly drag themselves along.

The night is fine, the moon sheds its soft light from the clear starlit sky. We fall asleep lulled by the dash of the waves which break on the shore within two gunshots from our tents.

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DJELIFAH.

Djelifah, 11th January.

THERE is a light mist this morning, of a transparent blue, gilded, as it were, by the sun, which tries to pierce through it. Arzilah assumes the look of an old fortified town of the Middle Ages.

About a hundred yards from our tent, between the camp and the *khouba*, there is a venerated spot, a *n'sala*, near another saint's tomb, but a saint of far less renown, one of the third class. It forms a sort of square terrace, whose flat roof is flanked at the corners by battlements built in tiers. A pulpit, with a straight, short flight of steps leading up to it, sculptured with a certain amount of artistic delicacy, has been scooped out in the outer wall; near by is a stone niche where the faithful can kneel in prayer, and which has also been formed in the wall. A narrow arched door leads into the interior. On the terrace, through the mist, white forms are moving with uplifted arms, kneeling, prostrating themselves. Down below in the cemetery, among the tombs, stones scattered on the earth, veiled women crouching in a

dejected attitude, suddenly rise with great lithe movements, stretch out their arms, depart, gliding rather than walking, disappear, and are lost in the grey haze that hovers over the ground.

Now the sun shines brilliantly in a splendid blue sky without a single cloud. On the beach, in front of the big, wretched gate, there is a bustling throng of people, either going to or returning from the town, and of bleating flocks driven by shepherds.

A magnificent soldier comes riding along on a horse, richly caparisoned in velvet and silk embroidered with gold. The wide sleeves of his fine cambric shirt and of his cherry-red caftan float and mix with

A "N'SALA."

the heavy folds of his two burnooses, one of white wool and the other of blue stuff, draped one over the other. He passes proudly by, at a walking pace, his gun across his high red saddle.

A poor mule drags himself painfully along, laden with heavy sacks of corn, on which two Arabs are perched armed with sticks, which are wielded with might and main to quicken his march.

Then follows a whole train of troops of donkeys, herds of oxen, cows, calves, and goats. And on the smooth beach, of a fine saffron colour, multitudinous rills wend their way capriciously in their narrow furrows over the fine-grained sand. The whole scene is charming in its diversity, and gaily picturesque.

Forestier is already in the saddle, and shouting to me as I am preparing to mount. I leap on my mule, and we soon come up with the caravan, which has gone on some distance. Ingram and Harris, the Nimrods of the party, have set off shooting ever since the morning.

Carlton, who has been ailing since yesterday, takes Antonio's mule in exchange for his own horse.

Here is a road! It has been formed by the tramp of mules, of horses, of camels, of goats, and of men, beating down the sand. It is almost level, very wide, too wide to continue a long way, and after a quarter of an hour's marching, it ends brusquely in an infinite number of narrow paths, deviating through the dwarf palms in every direction.

We are on a hill that overlooks Arzilah. What enchantment distance lends to a view! How the light transfigures it! And what a skilful scenic artist is this African sun, which transforms and idealises everything that it plays upon with its ardent luminous touch! Arzilah, the city of mud, with its dim walls, its cut-open towers, assumes all at once from this spot a fairy aspect, and looks as though it were one of the towns of the "Arabian Nights." Its white, aerial form, ensconced in its gardens, its masses of sombre green foliage, contrast with the intense blue of the sea; and the minarets of its mosques, swerving from the severe line of its ramparts, stand out in relief, gleaming with light, against the blue extent. In the foreground, blocking the high road lined with dwarf palms, is a flock of goats and a herdsman with a long stick, an impressive figure clad in a yellow *djellabieh*.

For a full hour we have been riding along, over an interminable plain of dwarf palms. Always at about a hundred yards ahead of us, our old Kaïd's tall silhouette profiles itself on the sky, stands on the background of valleys, perched, with his gun across his saddle, on his great devil of a horse, with his coat glistening with reddish brown reflections, jogging along with short, uniform, scanned steps, alarming from their very mathematical precision.

How many times have we tried, Forestier and I, to render in water-colours the amazing tints, the changing shades, and the iridescent reflections of that undefinable coat! What desperate efforts we have made to reproduce on the purest "Whatman," the tones, copper-coloured or faint blue, yellow or grey, gay or melancholic, of this moving croup, this stump of a bald tail, whose inimitable shades, as variable as those of a chameleon, changed every moment, according to the time of

the day, the direction of the wind, the inclemency of the weather. How many times we have verified to our bewilderment the inexorable regularity of this automatic pace, so improbably unchanging in its pendulum movement, that it served us as a chronometer for months, and we were able to count the time by the number of steps taken by this incomparable steed, this four-footed clepsydra!

And the rider! Have we not made sufficient attempt to fix on the pages of our sketch-book the undulating lines of this droll figure; to delineate on spotless pages the gaunt and fleeting vision of this old mummy, crouching in a monkey posture on the top of his high saddle,

ARZILAH FROM INLAND.

wrapped in bundles of wool, disappearing entirely, as though covered with a bell, under his pointed hood, beneath the stiff folds of a blue burnoose, faded, discoloured by the rain, embrowned by the sun, maculated by the mud, so shiny where it bulges, so dimmed inside the folds, so yellow on its flowing margins, that all these hues were united in one unique neutral tint of dubious green and violet, with a metallic lustre at the protuberances, and could be scarcely distinguished from the worn and faded coat of the poor old screw. When, in the midst of a cluster of dwerf palms or asphodels, horse and rider halt for a moment in the distance, you might have easily taken them for an old equestrian group in bronze left lying in a park.

He had the face of an old crone, so malicious, so amusing in its characteristic ugliness, our dear old scamp of a Kaïd, with his two thin,

grey, curly locks escaping coquettishly from under his turban, and wriggling on his hollow temples, shading his little, narrow, bulging forehead furrowed with wrinkles. The vomer of his long busked nose was so protuberant that it threatened to burst through the integument, and his tanned skin, of a red brown, shining and oily, was drawn tense over his prominent cheekbones. His small, piercing green eyes, deeply sinking under projecting brows in gimlet holes as it were, gleamed with a strange expression; and when between his thin, straggling grey beard his wide mouth opened, revealing a dark gulf lined with a few fragments of yellow teeth, and silent laughter shook his old carcase, the whole aspect of the man seemed to be nothing less than diabolical, full of irony, cunning, and cold cruelty, which made you feel uneasy for the moment.

Oh, the old pelican, the crafty rascal, the canting hypocrite—whose parchment-like face had become, by force of habit, indispensable to us! How droll he used to look when, squatting on the ground, his chimpanzee head leaning on his chest, he was grilling his emaciated legs before a glowing fire, and drying on his knees a check handkerchief full of holes and stained with snuff, whose services were often discarded in favour of a corner of his burnoose. What a look of devout satisfaction he had, when shaking on the back of his hand, from his long knotty fingers, a pinch of snuff that had fallen from his small, elegant, cocoa-nut box, oblong in shape, he put it to his beaked snout, and inhaled the powder so gratifying to his olfactory organ, with a loud deep sniff and indescribable twinkles of the eyes.

Very obliging and mindful, always attending to our little wants, and exquisitely polite, he pilfered right and left with the utmost freedom and a complete absence of scruples, just as he would have cut our throat and hacked us to pieces if circumstances had only permitted.

We leave the plateau, and descend into a valley. We cross some streams of small width, but deeply embedded between very slippery banks. The valley is deliciously fresh, and abounds with furze, heather, and thyme mingled with dwarf palms. On every side of us are numerous meandering streams, whose banks are dotted with flowers; tiny pools covered with water-lilies and cress, where, standing up to

their flanks in water, small-sized oxen drink, stretching out their dripping muzzles, and gazing at us quietly with their peaceful eyes. Goats are scattered among the trees and shrubs. You might fancy yourself on a Scotch moor. We climb the opposite slope, and halt on a hillock covered with thyme and dwarf palms, and strewn with blocks of grey stone. We have been on the march for only about four hours.

OUR OLD KAÏD.

The site is charming. On the crest of the opposite hill, which looks down on us, a village stands in hard outline against the sky. From the village intersecting paths lead to a spring, where young girls and old women go to fill their pitchers. On the right, far in the background, is the sea, contrasting with the green tops of orange groves covered with fruit, in front of which lines of fig-trees form a sort of grey curtain, broken by clusters of bamboos, from four to five yards high, bent by the wind, and entangled with one another. On the left, the vast Atlantic, with its livid tints, stretches away to the horizon; and from our plateau lies an immense green expanse of cork-trees, shrubs, and dwarf palms, among which you catch the gleam of lakes, the flash of winding streams. The tints seem bluer and bluer as the land rolls on into the dim distance, skirted by the long strip of the yellow sands of the beach, stretching away to the pale grey headland of Cape Spartel.

Some lads skirt round us at a distance, and offer us oranges, which they lay on the ground, not daring to come near. By degrees they grow bolder, and wind up by becoming quite tame. These urchins are very funny under the pointed hoods of their short-sleeved *djellabiehs*, with a slit at the elbow, beyond which they don't thrust their arms; and

since they are kept in a rigid horizontal position, they look like pinions, and at a distance make their owners appear as though they were penguins.

People from the village arrive. Their Kaïd enters into a parley with ours. The inhabitants, men and women, have left their huts; we see them standing, sitting, lying on small heights, watching the pitching of our camp.

The weather has grown cool, and we form a circle round a fire of brushwood and dry branches which has just been lit. The flames crackle and rise in a big red sheaf, and clouds of smoke cover the camp.

In the twilight, when the evening shiverings have begun to blow, we see the Kaïd appear, draped in his *haïk* of white wool, followed by people bearing provisions. His features are refined, his gait stately: he advances slowly, holding his head up with great dignity. In one hand he is carrying a pitcher of Kabyle shape, full of milk, and in the other a wooden porringer, containing butter made of ewe's milk. The men in burnooses walk silently behind him, bringing the *mouna*, some *kouskoussou*, loaves of bread, eggs, fowls. In the deepening night they look like a procession of phantoms. We receive the Kaïd in our tent, and invite him to take tea with us, which he accepts with a calm inclination of the head.

And this man, who has perhaps never seen twenty Europeans in his life, is ignorant of our customs, and has no point of contact with us,—this savage, who probably is for the first time in presence of the products of the West, doesn't feel the least embarrassment, is not at all disconcerted, and a few minutes after tea, fearing he might importune us by his presence, he shakes hands with us and sedately takes his leave.

* * * * * *

It has poured all night, and is pouring still. We rise in dull and cold weather, a permeating humidity pervading the tent. Outside, a fine, thick monotonous rain is falling, big dark clouds are trailing o'er a gloomy sky.

Each one of us keeps snug under the canvas shelter. The mules, tethered in a line, are standing motionless under the rain, with bent heads and eyes fixed on the ground; the shivering horses are impatiently pawing the soil and giving vent to prolonged neighs. Brooks, with a woe-begone look and wet to the skin, is passing to and fro between the

tent and the kitchen, drawing about his tall angular figure, rounding his shoulders, gliding on the moist grass, while his mind is a prey to a constant fume.

There is a frightful slush beneath our feet. The ground, a bed of flowers only yesterday, has been so soaked by the downpour and trampled by our going and coming, trodden upon by the dogs, that we don't know where to instal ourselves. No more grass, no more flowers, everything has been smashed down; we might fancy ourselves in a cowshed, and in a cowshed badly kept. Our trunks, our portmanteaus, our bags, all our baggage in fact, is lying in the mud. Our beds seem to float above a marsh, the water oozes through the canvas of the tent, which is filled with a thick haze, and every face wears a surly look. Blows and curses rain on unlucky Don, who, more than ever, persists in establishing himself between the legs of exasperated Forestier, and in drying his dripping coat on his victim's calves. And when, in his own despite, he quits his favourite quarters, it is only to take refuge on our beds, where he makes a frightful mess, assisted by his mate Rover.

PEOPLE FROM THE VILLAGE.

Harris is down in the mouth, and his small angular face, with sharp drawn lines like a knife-blade, takes a still keener edge, and contracts with nervous twitches.

Ingram, swathed in his furs, coughs more than ever, and between two fits gives vent to his bile, with praiseworthy impartiality, on Brooks and the dogs. Marshall, whose leaden hue is slowly turning to green, is lying inert on his couch, indifferent to everything; and when his liquid voice, crisper than ever, inquires plaintively of the echoes, "Has anybody seen my Mary Ann?" the furious burst of our voices in touching deep accord answers "No!" to his mournful laments.

Forestier, with a courage that I envy, and with a disdain for

comfortable quarters that I admire, sits down on a trunk, his feet in the mud, in front of a rickety table with defective light. Though irritated to the last degree by Don, who rushes every moment between his legs and upsets his apparatus, he lays out his paper, his tubes of Chinese white and neutral tints, seizes his brushes, and begins a sketch in body colours. We are going to collaborate in some illustrations for a novel, which is to be published in the next summer number of the "Illustrated London News;" and full of the noble zeal inspired by the state of the weather, Forestier bravely sits down to his task. As I turn a deaf ear to his pressing solicitations to set to work likewise, he hurls his maledictions on me, and threatens me with the thunder of Mr. Jackson's wrath if the "number" is delayed by my fault.

THE DJEBEL-SARSAR.

Sahal-el-Khemis, 13th January.

THE rain has stopped; we are going at last to break up the camp. Carlton's condition has got worse. By imprudently exposing himself to the rain, and not taking care to wrap himself sufficiently at night, his cold has assumed alarming proportions. In spite of all our efforts to keep him with us, he has saddled his horse and set off at full gallop in the direction of Tangier.

It was only after our return that we learnt that he had made the journey in thirteen hours, crossing the Ghreefa at high tide, at the risk of being carried out to sea, as had happened to two Moors who were drowned when attempting to get over the river at the same time as he

did. On reaching the town, he fainted with exhaustion, and was forced to stay six weeks in bed with congestion of the lungs.

We set out in dull, wet weather, floundering in the tracks soaked by the rain. The mules, sinking knee-deep in the soft clay, hesitate, make long pauses before putting one foot before the other, and often refuse to continue at all. The caravan moves on in a long straggling line, and is severed by lamentable breaks, which make it very awkward for those in the rear, who, without guides, grope their way, and while trying to find safe roads, involve their mules up to the flanks in mud, getting astray on false trails. The Kaïd makes frequent halts for the laggards to come up, shows them the way, and urges on the men, who have the utmost difficulty in getting their beasts to make any headway in this sea of mire. After a time we get clear of this and climb a hill, only to descend again and plunge into another marsh, repeating these trying exertions.

Gripping my mule hard, and urging her on by words and prods, I advance laboriously, and the sight of Forestier at my side, making the same struggle with his recalcitrant beast, soothes the bitterness of my precarious position. Nearly bent double, he makes desperate efforts to keep his balance on his mule, who several times has almost disappeared with him in the depths of the accursed bogs. It is heartrending to see him, with his bristling hair, like that of a Calabrese brigand who has retired from business, indulging in stern monologues with his ungainly beast, whose irresistible tendency to take a hip-bath in every stream of water, in each marsh we cross, he sturdily represses by belabouring her with the stick. Our hands are covered with swellings through thrashing and tugging at the reins, and it is not without secret envy that we see, in our distress, Antonio a hundred yards in front of us, comfortably seated amid bags and rugs on his mule, rolling cigarettes, and letting the reins loose on the neck of his intelligent mule, who, as a brave and sagacious little creature, jogs briskly on, without stumbling, over the swampy soil. This irony of destiny and the flagrant constatation of our utter inability to do anything, contrary to the wishes of our mules, finally succeed in crushing us, and we follow at a distance in a pensive mood.

At last, after tiring alternatives, we enter upon a sort of sandy road covered in some places with sweet herbs, and furrowed by streamlets of limpid water. Huge cork-trees with gnarled trunks shoot up vigorously through greyish rocks, among thorny cactuses; and their twisted boughs, touching the ground, are lost to sight amid the tall ferns and the dwarf palms that grow everywhere.

The weather has brightened, and in the now blue sky big silvery clouds run, drifted by the breeze. We take our lunch, sitting on rocks, in the shade of secular trees. On the other side of the road, on a rock, two Arabs are standing, their burnooses floating in the wind; their figures look very white against the blue sky. A shepherd clad like an ancient Roman passes gravely on the road, driving his flock before him, and disappears round a turn, behind a cluster of lentisks and olive-trees. Far in the distance, at the end of an immense undulating plain, you see above a range of hills the blue summits of the Djebel-Sarsar.

We quit with regret this lovely nook, and set out once more across the watery tracks, resuming our late arduous toil. Then, suddenly, at the top of an eminence the scene changes. A sandy road, with patches of fine turf, runs in a straight line, between lucerns, fields of mallows, intermingled with wild poppies, meadows of lavender that fills the air with its perfume, across cultivated land, wooded valleys, orchards full of trees laden with fruit. The road passes through a pretty wood of olive and fig trees, where we halt, to wait for the rest of the caravan; and when we catch sight of the first mule on a ridge, we march on again. Skirting a stream of water that flows from the heights, we continue our journey, when we reach the upper part of the plateau, in the bed of the stream, which serves us as a thoroughfare.

This brook is very picturesque: the clear waters ripple o'er the pebbles, falling in cascades over the rocks that obstruct its course, widening into little quiet ponds, filled with aquatic flowers. We clear a passage through stunted evergreen oaks, terebinths, oleanders. In some places the branches are entwined above our heads, forming an arcade. Now and again there's a brisk rustling of branches, a strong waving of foliage, a sudden halt of the dogs: it is a wild boar surprised in his

lair, who has been put to flight by our presence, and has rushed with a bound into the thicket. Blackbirds rise on the wing at every moment, with shrill cries; big snakes, of greenish hue, glide over the mossy stones, disappear underneath, and clouds of insects buzz noisily in the air. On every side flowers are growing: blue daisies, red anemones, climbing plants that entwine the shrubs.

The flowers crushed by the horses' hoofs, the broken ferns, the leaves swept down as we pass, emit strong scents, like those of new-mown hay, and the air, laden with these sweet and moist odours, passes over our heads, bathing our brows with its pungent effluvia.

In the sky, white vapours glide like gauze veils, rend and disperse in light flakes, under the lash of the wind.

Eagles are hovering high up in the dense blue, and numerous vultures follow us, whirling above our heads. From time to time one of them pounces straight down on a prey, a couple of yards in front of us, and my mule, terrified by the tawny flash of its sudden descent, trembles all over, pricks her ears, and makes a dead halt.

A strong breeze twirls with a roar of billows this ocean of verdure, rolling it in long oscillations with sharp turmoils, sudden and silent pauses.

These wild steppes end on well-wooded terraces of fine sand, and we gaily pursue our way, between rows of beeches, birches, holm oaks. Through the glades on our right we get glimpses of the sea, of a soft blue, almost grey in tint, with broad bands of milky white. On our left the Djebel-Sarsar stands in clearer outlines on the horizon, with its jagged summits of hard and cold blue, shaded with violet tinges.

On the border of the wood we come on rugged ground, traversed by a deep ditch, on the other side of which the grove continues thicker and denser, planted with fine evergreen oaks, odoriferous pines, cork-trees, cedars, acacias. In this region, the soil of clay, quartz, and sand mixed with feldspar, is so blended with red ochre that the ground seems almost of this colour. We follow this ravine, which leads by a gentle gradient to a plateau bespread with slender shrubs. We pass near huts of charcoal-burners, whence the acrid smoke from the

green branches in the subdued fires, shrouds us in volumes of bluish vapour, whirled away by the wind.

From there, we can see the houses of a large village where we are going to camp. We are now at the extremity of the plateau, which ends in a huge cliff, descending abruptly, with sharp projections, down to

COUNTRY WOMEN.

the sea, which unfolds itself in all its grandeur, lit by the golden gleams of the setting sun. We skirt along the lofty cliff, refreshed by the breeze from the sea. Our jaded mules take fresh courage, and in a few minutes we are at the entrance to the village, a hollow road barred by enormous blocks of stone, flanked on each side by steep banks with cactuses and thorn hedges, behind which we perceive

gables of grey thatch, stone or clay walls, and high stakes fixed in the ground.

We have scarcely passed the first houses, when we are welcomed by the deafening bay of a band of dogs, yellow, lean, surly, and terribly aggressive. They dart upon us, snap at the houghs of our beasts, and we have some difficulty in protecting our legs from their sharp fangs. A few stones skilfully aimed by our muleteers quickly disperse them, and they decamp, yelling with pain. To be hit by a stone is what an Arab dog dreads most. Threaten him with a stick, and he will become more rabid; but if you only make a pretence of stooping to pick up a pebble, he will pack off as fast as his legs can carry him, and will then perhaps venture to bark at a distance. The village appears to be of a pretty considerable size. A broad, irregular, broken road, dotted with big stones and muddy plashes, runs through it, from one end to the other. At the farther extremity, other travellers are encamped near a little pond, on the opposite side of which we pitch our tents facing theirs.

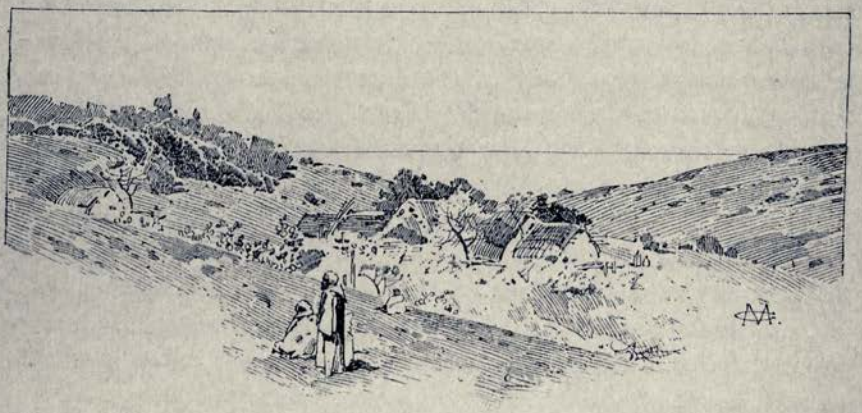
Our neighbours are Englishmen—Captain T. P., whom an attack of gout confines to his bed, and his son. They welcome us to their tent, and offer us refreshments; and while Harris, Ingram, and Marshall talk sport with their hosts and compare the merits of Irish and Scotch whisky, Forestier and I discreetly efface ourselves, and set off to ramble through the village.

The rectangular houses with thatched roofs are irregularly built on each side of the broad road, all of them facing different points of the compass. On every roof there are storks; on every house are one or two nests of these privileged birds, sacred in the eyes of the natives, who would consider it a crime or a sacrilege to kill one of them. They regard them with profound respect, under the ancient belief that in these birds exist the souls of their ancestors, who lived long ago in great islands on the other side of the ocean, and have returned in this guise to protect them. They roam about with perfect freedom, clapping their beaks and beating the air with their white wings rimmed with black, happy with the gift of life, sure of not being molested or disturbed.

We return for tea. The site of our camp is admirable. It lies on the margin of a broad esplanade overhanging a fertile valley reaching

down to the sea. Facing us towards the north there is a range of wooded mountains, abounding, so they say, in game and wild boars.

We spend the evening with our neighbours, and these "mighty hunters before the Lord" detail in turn their cynegetical feats, their hairbreadth escapes, in their travels; and their narratives, diluted by draughts of whisky, gradually assume the dimensions of epic poems. Common incidents of sport, ride on a mule through Arab towns, turn all at once into fabulous exploits—the discovery of new worlds. The death of a wild cat, shot in the thicket, is transformed into a sanguinary tiger-



A CORNER OF SAHAL-EL-KHEMIS.

hunt, enough to make your hair stand on end. The fact of finding yourself one fine morning in a field, face to face with a bull of uneven temper, furnishes material for a dramatic conflict with a rhinoceros, which makes your flesh creep. The unexpected meeting with a harmless snake, crossing a garden-path, gives rise to a terrible story of an alligator-hunt, a fight with a rattlesnake and a host of other unclean beasts, which sends a stream of cold perspiration down your backs. And when one thinks of the awful risks incurred by these intrepid men, these bold hunters, these daring explorers, one is surprised to see them with their heads still on their shoulders, and you ask yourself in terror if, after such woful sufferings, their brain isn't a little upset; and in

the presence of these heroes with muscles of steel, with nerves so finely tempered, you preserve a discreet silence, partly from salutary fear and partly from indulgent pity.

Ingram's description of his feats had been prosaic, quite commonplace, utterly disastrous to the reputation of our guns—a few big game such as everybody brings down, a fair number of partridges, hares, pheasants, that was his sum total; not the slightest incident that could wring your nerves or harrow your feelings; everything was as tame as it well could be. Marshall didn't shine any better. Forestier had, once in his life, winged a couple of larks, one of which recovered after he had nursed it, while my tale of slaughter amounted to the murder of one hare, long ago, quite by accident,—a love-lorn hare, who had committed suicide, the poor wretch, by running against the barrels of my gun, and, without my knowing it, the trigger had done the business on its own account. But Harris was going to brighten our tarnished fame,—he, the champion of England with the ambitious device, "Quo non ascendam?"

The captain's son, who for some time had been nervously handling his revolver in a way that boded ill for the safety of his neighbours, had just finished a complicated blood-curdling story of leopard, in which his revolver, he declared, as he thrust it in our faces, had been his best friend, when Harris, in a tone that indicated the most retiring modesty, began to relate in faultless diction, with a thrill in his voice, a pathetic roll of the eyes, and the sober gestures befitting its epic grandeur, "My ride to Sheshouan."

He had often told it us before, each time with numerous and pleasing variations, which increased its interest twofold, rejuvenating it, giving it more striking aspects, quite "up to date," and covering him with fresh glory.

This time he surpassed himself, rising in his narrative to sublime heights of eloquence; and it is deeply to be regretted that this latest version,—the final one, we hope,—has not been stereotyped, that it may remain for ever graven on the memory of his contemporaries, as a model of incomparable style, as an ineffaceable record of the courage, the presence of mind, the indomitable energy of an unassuming Fellow

of the Royal Geographical Society of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Like Napoleon the Great, whom moreover he resembled in other respects—in his short figure, for instance—he had made a name for himself in fabled story, that pedestal of world-wide reputations. His was not one of those vulgar, sonorous legends, smelling of gunpowder, resounding with cannon-balls and howitzer-shells, but a smart legend, with an air of distinction, elegantly dressed, in new gloves and the finest linen, redolent of the sweet odours of iris and lavender, an honest and respectable legend whose "home-made" manufacture you can scent a mile off. It was a legend that would inevitably attract, as the wire rod does the lightning, every honour and every dignity on its happy hero; and as you listen to him, you let yourself go, without thinking, to softly whisper, Sir Walter Harris! His Grace! His Highness! You were looking down, fancying you could see the insignia of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the reward of great deeds and loyal services, clasped round his knee, and you were feeling inclined to ejaculate with him, "Quo non ascendam?"

He first appeared on the scene mounted on a mule, armed with his revolver, followed by his servant—I was going to say his squire—wending his way o'er hills and dales, *en route* for Sheshouan, like a gallant knight of the Middle Ages in quest of adventures. Then were coming ferocious mountaineers ready to cut his throat, whom he quelled by a mere glance and the offer of a few cigarettes. With his eagle eye he discovered, in the midst of mountains duly indicated and named on the map, plateaus as big as your hand which the geographers, with culpable negligence, had neglected to insert, and baptized them with his own name—Christian-name, surname, and nicknames—in order to make good this unpardonable deficiency. At Sheshouan he was smoking cigarettes at his window, with the most unruffled composure, while the furious inhabitants were ransacking the place, to discover and impale him. Then he disappeared in a trice from the town, nobody knew how, at the touch of a magician's wand as it were, met with brigands who saved his life instead of taking it, and offered him their purses instead of stealing his—and so on.

I won't relate in detail this sublime narrative, "My ride to Sheshouan." I really couldn't! Harris, surnamed the serpent-charmer, Al-Aissoui, as they call him throughout the East, in the West, the South, and perhaps, too, in the North, in fact right throughout the whole universe—Harris alone could, in a moment of inspiration, resuscitate from the depths of his memory the choice expressions, and reproduce the moving tones, the startling description of "My ride to Sheshouan;" that jewel, chased with consummate art, with such refined taste, full of discreet reticence, of subtle allusions, of charming candour, that exquisite specimen of the work of the dilettante author, this flower of the "Upper Ten." Frenzied applause greeted "My ride to Sheshouan," and Harris raised his hand to his brow under the impression that laurels were already sprouting there.

The talk went on, for a long time yet, about hunting, travels, and adventures. One of the Nimrods, I forget which, carried away by the fumes of his over-excited imagination, and burning with the desire to eclipse his fellow-sportsman, began to unfold his tale of still mightier deeds. With a tragic air and a sweeping gesture, disastrous to the stability of the whisky bottles, which rolled from the table on to the floor, he told us a story of an ever-memorable hunt, in which the species of animals and geological epochs were confounded with the same facility as he mistook his neighbour's glass of Irish whisky for his own Scotch. The story bristled with antediluvian beasts, which he shot in droves, just as if they had been so many inoffensive rabbits.

By a series of imperceptible transitions, facilitated by a fertile imagination, which readily adapted itself to the caprice of a boundless fancy and made the orator the dupe of his own inventions, the tigers after the second bottle had changed into megatheriums, the rhinoceroses into mastodons, the alligators into megalosaurs, exactly in the same way as, after the first bottle, the cat had been transformed into a tiger, the bull into a rhinoceros, and the snake into an alligator.

Fortunately, a third bottle was not uncorked, else Heaven only knows what serpents of the deep, what dragons, what unheard-of monsters our heroes would not have given the finishing stroke to.

That was a sad blow to the glorious reputation of "My ride to

Sheshouan." The star of Harris was for the moment on the wane, but only to burst forth again with renewed splendour shortly after by the dazzling exploit of "A visit to Wazzan," where, after being loaded with honours and rugs by the sherif, he was nearly being ingloriously thrashed by the blackguard of a son, who was soundly reprimanded by the irate father for being so grossly wanting in respect for the author of "My ride to Sheshouan" and "A visit to Wazzan."

And Daudet thought that Tartarin was dead! Tartarin is immortal, like Daudet, although he isn't a member of the French Academy.

EL-ARAISH.

El-Araish, 14th January.

THIS morning the sun is shining brightly, a fresh breeze is blowing, we shall have magnificent weather for travelling. Groups of sightseers are stationed before the camp. We are doubtless to them what an unknown tribe from Central Africa on view at the Crystal Palace would be to Londoners, and our presence seems to afford them much amusement.

A sort of idiot penetrates, partly at the instigation of the crowd, who want to amuse themselves at our expense, within the precincts of the camp, and tries to enter our tent. He utters inarticulate cries and gesticulates like a madman. We bundle him out neck and crop, to the great disappointment of the yokels, who were expecting a rather lively scene.

We mount our mules. At the moment when I put my foot in the stirrup the rotten cord breaks for the third time during our journey. Djebel-Tarik cobbles it as best he can, and away we march with a bright sun above and a cooling wind from the east. The Kaïd takes the lead, and the whole caravan follows at haphazard, just as the animals feel inclined, those who have the best steeds in front and those who are badly mounted following in the rear. We make our way pell-mell,

gaily, in a noisy and picturesque disorder, through the laden mules and the jovial muleteers, who urge on their beasts, get a fallen one on its legs, incite another that refuses to leap a ditch by shouts and cudgellings, run bawling after a fugitive playing truant in the fields, or re-fasten a loose bundle.

Then as we proceed on our way the order of march is dislocated and turns into Indian file. The distance between the riders increases; the restive mules refuse to advance, or drag themselves along at a snail's pace, while others, one doesn't know why, trip briskly on. Between the head of our line and the tail there's sometimes a distance of a couple of miles, if not more. Antonio generally goes on in front with the baggage while the Kaïd stays with us, leading the way on his bony jade with its immutable pace, acting both as a guidon and an ensign. Brooks, pallid and haggard, brings up the rear, absorbed in himself, trying to co-ordinate ideas, always feeling the effects of the jostlings he has endured and thinking of the others to come.

A labyrinth of brooks with muddy beds and steep slippery banks flow at the bottom of the valley. The mules, supported and excited by the drivers, cross with difficulty, impeded at each step by the sticky soil. One of them sinks on her hind quarters and wallows with her baggage in the miry water. The men plunge in nearly up to their waist to her assistance, raise the baggage on each side and hold it aloft, while the relieved mule gets up as best she can and arrives safe and sound at the other bank. We climb pretty briskly a large waste tract. The soil is poor and sandy, the vegetation dry and scanty. There is any number of thistles, and here and there a sickly cork-tree and a cluster of slender shrubs. The top widens out into a barren pebbly plateau swept by the wind, while the sea stretches away on our right. In the distance El-Araish lies, facing us, bathed in the sun, standing out in a luminous mass against its green mountainous background, jutting as a headland towards the sea, with its ramparts washed by the blue waters of the Kous.

The nature of the ground changes: the hard and dry sand gives place to soft loam and yielding soil, dotted with pools, thorn hedges, heaps of stones, and we wander over cultivated fields soaked with water

like sponges, where our mules flounder knee-deep in the earth. In front the Kaïd with unerring eye feels his way, avoids the dangerous places, skirts the slimy swamps, and retraces his steps when he has advanced into uncertain latitudes. We keep in his wake, our eyes riveted on his blue burnoose, our mules treading in the track of his horse, and we keep close at his heels. After a good three-quarters of an hour of this fatiguing exercise we reach a less diluvial soil and begin to descend the slope sprinkled with a few shrubs. We pass a saint's tomb and chapel shaded by tamarisks and olive-trees. We have now got beyond the tilled lands among the dwarf palms, the bay laurels, the terebinths; at our feet flowers of all sorts—mallows, daisies, marigolds—grow in rich abundance on the slope which descends gently down to the river. A semblance of a road brings us through a *douar*, where the dogs rush after our mules, barking loudly, while their Arab masters, squatting on the roadside, look on unconcerned, without making any attempt to recall or silence them.

At the bottom of the hill we proceed along the water's edge on banks of fine sand. The river fills the valley, forming a vast lake, an admirably safe haven, but inaccessible to vessels of heavy tonnage on account of the sands that block the inlet.

We halt on the bank facing the foam-covered bar, between the calm sea on the right and the broad, unruffled Kous on the left, encircled by wooded heights.

In front of us, on the other side of the river, El-Araish, glittering in the sun, stands clear against the dark green hills, its tall white *Kasbah* contrasting with the intensely blue sky; its terraces, ablaze with light, descending in tiers down to the sea, and the battlements of its old limestone ramparts coloured with burnt ochre reflecting in the Kous.

The town, of Berber origin, at one time ceded to Spain and then recaptured by Mouley Ismael, very flourishing in bygone days when its corsairs infested the sea and ravaged the shores of the Mediterranean, has to-day completely fallen into decay. Its population of three or four thousand Jews and Moors eke out a wretched living by retail trade, in the middle of its crumbling ramparts, its dilapidated houses, its horribly filthy streets.

The muleteers arrive with the baggage, which is carried across to the other side by the ferry-boat. The Kaïd, who has remained with us, is sleeping at our side, stretched on the sand, with his arm passed through his horse's bridle. We take to sketching while waiting for Ingram, Harris, and Marshall, who with Antonio and Djebel-Tarik have set off at dawn to shoot with the youngest of our neighbours at Sahal-el-Khemis, and are going to join us by a different route from ours.

The place where we have halted is full of stir and bustle. The ferry-boat, a heavy and clumsy barge, carries to and fro people, beasts, and goods. All along the beach there is a ceaseless stream of people, passing and repassing.

A Jewish family has just disembarked, and trots off in lame-dog style over the soft sand. The mother, with a sallow, shiny face and a fat body, bestrides a mangy donkey, holding before her two dirty little creatures with an olive skin—her progeny. The father, a tall, thin man with round shoulders, hollow eyes, squinting looks, follows panting behind, clinging to the tail of a broken-winded and glandered mule, laden with planks, sacks, and clothes, whom he belabours unmercifully with a heavy *matrack*. His son, a queer sort of a little fellow with a crafty face, jogs at his heels, carrying a heavy bundle on his head.

On a fine white mule in full gallop, a young Arab, with gleaming eyes, bare head, half-clad in a burnoose full of holes, clasps on his breast a bewitching and delicate creature, his sister most likely, enveloped in a ragged *haïk* of white silk. Locked in each other's arms, splendid in their artless grace, their gleaming tatters, the flying pair, with their fine heads erect, their lithe brown busts shining with blue reflections amid all these flowing garments, form an impressive picture, full of charming originality, of savage poetry.

Some soldiers next arrive, handsome, grave-looking men, with gloomy faces and calm demeanour. They alight from their horses, which they hold by the bridle, take off their pointed spurs, thrust them into the barrels of their muskets. Draped in their blue and white burnooses, they come and greet our Kaïd, and rest on the sand, reclining in superb attitudes, waiting until the ferry-boat returns.

Our hunters have arrived. They bring back seventeen partridges,

a pigeon, and a hare, as well as a haunch of venison of wild boar killed the evening before, which has been given to them by their fellow-sportsman. We leap into a boat, which lands us on the quay on the other side, where we find our steeds, carried across by the ferry-boat. Under an arcade Moorish custom-house officers are making entries, jotting down figures, while Arabs are measuring out corn. Boys and beggars in rags pester us for alms while we again mount our mules.

We are now in the town; the ascent is rough, the street is narrow, lined by stalls, shops, kept by gunsmiths, ironmongers, drapers, boot-makers, grocers, all of them diminutive in size, exceedingly dark, above all very dirty, and emitting unsavoury smells. Repulsive Jews plague us with the offer of their services, swarthy little urchins follow us, feeling our boots, fingering our clothes, grimacing like marmosets.

We reach the *Souk*, a very large quadrangle lined on each side by arcades with shops. Continuing the ascent, we cross a wide, well-frequented street, and passing through a gate we are outside the town on a vast esplanade, where broad pools formed by the rain glitter in the sun. Not far off is a ruined *khouba*, shaded by tamarisks, near which we are going to pitch our camp. Leaving our mules to the care of the men who are busy unloading the baggage, Forestier and I return to the town.

Near the gate is a small café—a strip of wall with a rush-covered roof projecting from it, and supported by two wooden posts. Each side is sheltered by reed lattice-work, where vines, clematis, and honeysuckle climb. The floor, covered with mats, is raised a couple of feet above the ground. In a corner the *kaouadji*, an aged negro, is putting a coffee-pot on the fire, and Arabs squatting on the mats smoke and drink. On our entering they rise politely to make room for us. The coffee is good, but we begin to feel an unpleasant itching in our legs, and we make all haste to pay our score and decamp.

The gateway is lined with blocks of freestone, with embattled summits, and above the arch are embrasures with loopholes. On each side extend high grey walls, stained with yellow stains and broad reddish-brown streaks. It has so sadly deteriorated through the neglect of the Arabs, it has been so often whitewashed and plastered, that the

THE MARKET-PLACE OF AL-ARAISH.

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angles of the arches are effaced, the delicate arabesques which once adorned it have disappeared under the rough coatings of plaster and lime-wash, and the masonry has been completely eaten away at the base. Under the vault the rains have formed a marsh of brackish water, and every time that a horse, a mule, or a donkey splashes through this liquid mud, it bespatters the walls, the worm-eaten panels of the rotten gate, as well as the passers-by, if there happen to be any.

SOUTH GATE OF EL-ARAISH.

We skirt along the wall with the utmost precaution, and arrive in the street at the other end without any hitch. Through a wide, curved door on our right we catch a glimpse of a large square court with arcades, filled with an animated and noisy crowd. Mules, horses, asses, are standing near mountains of corn, inflated sacks, and bales. It's the corn-market.

In the street facing this spot, crouching against the wall in the glare of the sun, an old negress is selling bread. From a filthy, woollen mass protrude, like reptiles underneath a blanket, emaciated limbs, enormous spatulated feet, grey with dust, arms like a mummy's, with long, bony, wrinkled hands, of a dark violet, with faint bluish-red tints on the palms and the tips of the fingers, where the worn-

out epidermis had almost disappeared. Her nose is nearly as flat as her face, and her big, white, rolling eyes are injected with blood. This unformed, age-worn wreck is a hideous sight.

A herd of harebrained, small calves, no bigger than dogs, dart between our legs, and gaily romp and frisk in every direction under the charge of a young lad.

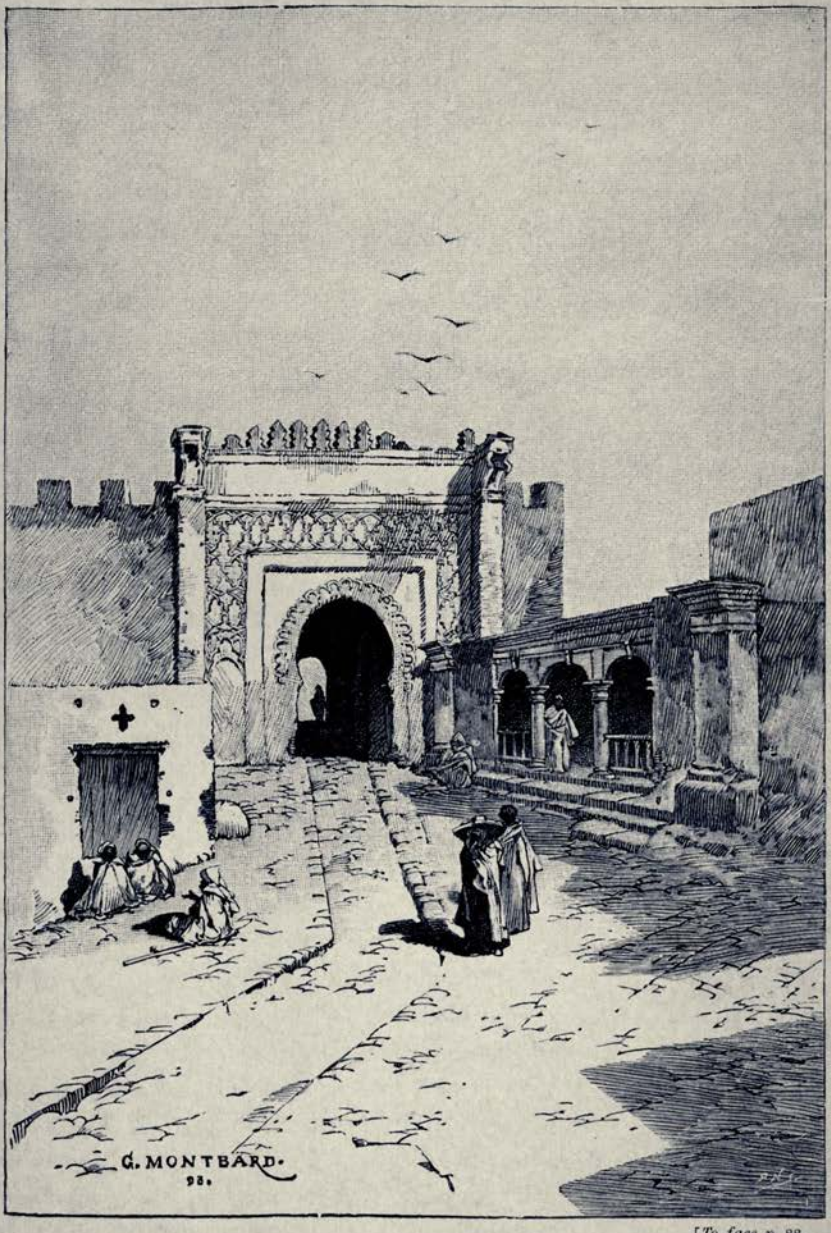
Mules pass with a whole family on their backs, the father in the middle, his wife behind clinging to him with her arms around his waist, while he holds in front of his saddle, like a bunch of flowers, an armful of papooses clad in all sorts of colours, and the mule, in spite of the weight, trots along with a brisk, firm step.

In front, tall, untidy negroes drive little black donkeys with their backs bent under heavy sacks.

We come up to the *Souk*, which we crossed a short time since; the huge market-place is flooded with light, the heat is intense. Under some apologies for tents of worn-out canvas stretched on cross-beams some Arabs are lying on the ground. You distinguish at the opening empty boxes, planks, boards, and on heaps of rags tattered children rolling with dogs.

Arabs in long burnooses and hoods turned down move slowly in this furnace, with the gait of white friars. In the centre of the place a dark, shrivelled carcase of a camel, amid swarms of flies, is being devoured with repulsive avidity by dogs, and cloyed vultures, intoxicated with carrion, fly away heavily in the blue sky.

We take refuge in the arcades. What a state of dilapidation! The pavement is broken up almost everywhere, leaving big gaps; the columns, with their foundations laid bare, are worn away, polished by the incessant contact of perspiring bodies, of greasy garments, of the mules rubbing themselves against their facings. Some of the shops are open, and their blackened weather-boards, falling down almost to the ground, are covered with a thick coat of mud and dust. In a hole in the wall, about four feet square, goods are gathered. Here are fine woollens from the mountains of Ourdighia, there are piled up the coarser *beldia* stuffs from the flocks that graze on the plains bordering upon the sea. By the side are coarse wool carpets, big check



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GATEWAY OPENING ON THE MARKET-PLACE OF AL-ARAISH.

cotton fabrics of red and blue, which are worn by negresses round their waists, red silk sashes and scarves, stuffs of gold thread, silk *oukaia*, with which Jewesses deck their heads, tapes for slinging *yataghans*.

Farther on is a grocer's shop; the owner is sitting smoking his *kif* amid packets of candles, cakes of soap, blocks of salt. Wooden trays contain piles of sugar stained with fly-spots, covered with wasps and gnats. Rings of dried figs hang in front, by the side of masses of compressed dates, plastered with insects that have stuck fast to the gluey surface.

A charcoal dealer's stall is kept by a negro as black as his own charcoal, which he retails in tiny quantities after weighing it in a pair of scales.

We emerge once more under the blazing sun at the other end of the square, in front of a superb embattled ogee gateway. It is in a good state of preservation, at least in the upper part, which, being out of the reach of the whitewasher's brush, has escaped the disastrous coats of lime that have clogged all the fine edges of the lower parts. The grey colour of the stone, corroded by moss and lichen, its sombre battlements worn and defaced by the rain and the briny atmosphere, make it look as though it belonged to the Middle Ages, the gateway of a feudal manor. The double row of arabesques, in the form of a horseshoe, that line the arch, is extremely delicate, and the interlaced ornaments that cover the façade are of charming design, and carved with refined taste. Joined to the gateway at right angles projects a portico with four columns, of the same style as those of the *Souk*. You ascend to it by a flight of disjointed steps. On the ground Arabs clad in burnooses are having their nap in the cool shade, or dreaming of Mahomet's Paradise houris as they count the beads of their rosaries.

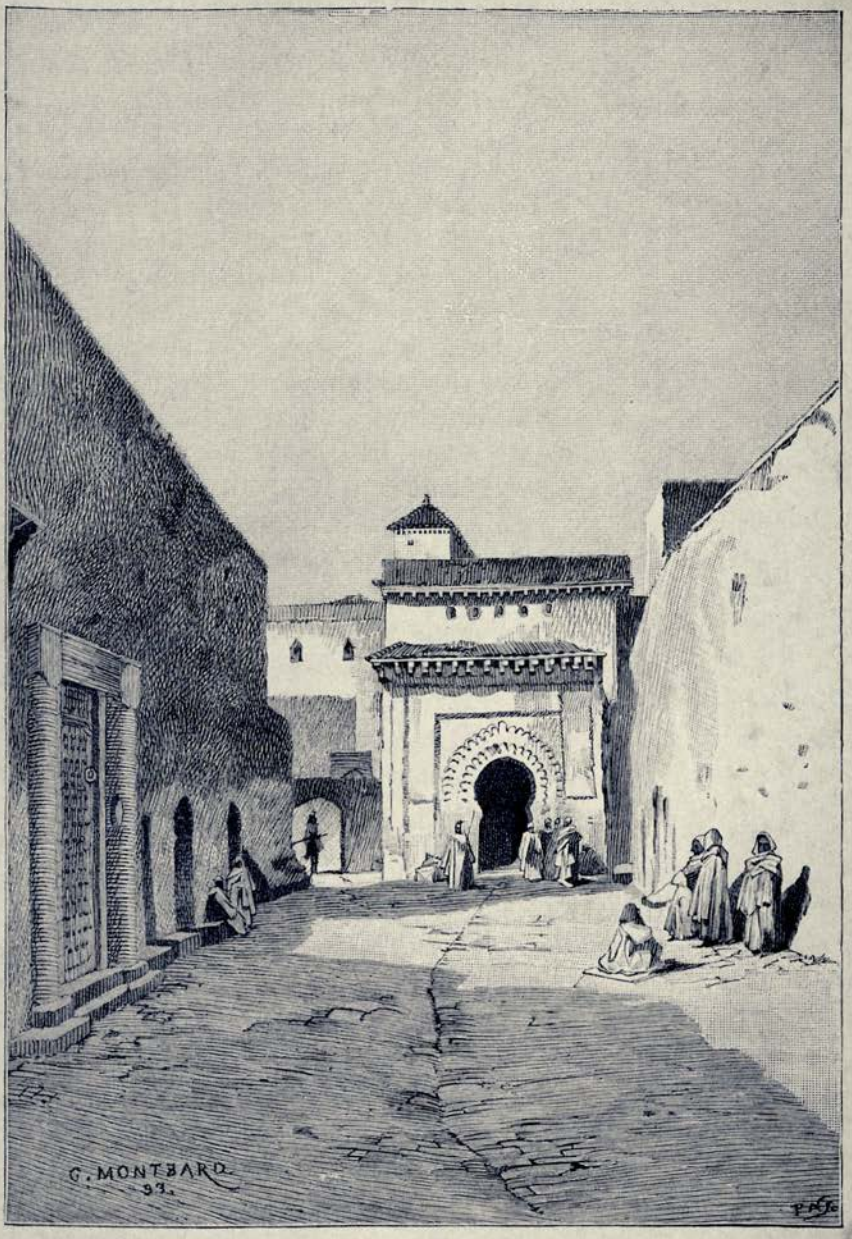
On the other side of the gate is a maze of narrow streets. One of these, which we select haphazard, brings us to a vast courtyard, encumbered with manure, full of stagnant ponds, and surrounded by high buildings. Horses ready saddled, luxuriously accoutred, are there neighing and pawing the ground, under the care of a sturdy negro clad in a lemon-coloured robe, a big scimitar swinging at his side. Through the half-opened door we perceive vaguely in the dim background of a

large room a group of soldiers, some stretched on the ground, others standing, smoking, and chatting. Two or three, catching sight of us, plant themselves on the door's sill, and, with a smile on their lips, they jabber something or other in Arabic, the reverse of complimentary, no doubt. One of them has a remarkable appearance: tall, slim, hard-featured, with an expressive physiognomy, flashing eyes, and small even teeth of dazzling white, which set off his red lips, shaded by a black moustache with reddish-brown tints. His muscles are finely moulded, and his brown hands, a trifle long, are of an extremely delicate shape. He wears, like all the regulars under the Sultan, a very tall *fez* with a blue tuft of floss silk, and a burnoose of blue cloth, partly covering another of white wool. In his gesture, when he points us out to his comrades, his ample sleeves rise up, disclosing the edge of his white silk shirt, contrasting with the subdued deep blue of his *sulham*, which falls below his knees. Well at ease in soft boots of yellow morocco embroidered with red silk, he holds himself smartly erect, and his strongly arched feet keep their firm curve when he stands on the ground.

A SOLDIER.

We take the first street before us. It is paved with round pebbles, flanked by very high walls, and on their whole façades the sun cuts out dazzling squares of light, which are made still more vivid by the strong shades projected from the opposite sides.

The end of the street is blocked, so to speak, by the front of a building, through which opens a wide gate with arabesques. A roof supported by vermilion-painted beams, covered with green tiles, on which



THE LAW COURTS OF AL-ARAISH.

[*To face p.* 90.

grows a mass of lichen, moss, and dry plants, projects from a height of ten feet above the summit of the gateway arch. A soldier armed with a gun guards the entrance, and silent groups are waiting patiently for their turn to go in.

This place is the Law Court—the "Justice." It is here that the Kadi decides every case that falls within his jurisdiction, and dispenses summary justice, the punishment being inflicted at once without more ado, as soon as the sentence is pronounced.

Passing through a small arched porch to the left of the court, we leave the town by the eastern gate. When seen from outside, the old Portuguese wall, with its battlements of freestone admirably joined, has an imposing effect. We turn to the right, and in a few minutes we are in the camp.

A butcher has installed himself at a hundred yards from our tents. On a cross-beam, supported by two forked poles planted in the ground, sheep are suspended by their legs. An Arab with bare arms, his sleeves tucked up, his burnoose thrown back, is slaughtering an animal, skinning it with an old notched knife. In a twinkle the beast is carved in joints; and the butcher, standing in a pool of blood and mud, with his arms red with blood, his burnoose soiled with big purple patches, dresses the meat, hangs it on nails driven in the cross-beam, suspending the smaller pieces by cords, and serves his customers. The latter make a horrible mess of the gory meat, wrangle over the price, lay the morsels down, pick them up again, move away, then return and slip them into their hood or a corner of their burnoose after grumblingly paying the butcher.

One of them has bought half-a-dozen sheep's heads, which he has tied together, put on his donkey, whom he afterwards calmly bestrides, and sets off with his disgusting load all dripping with blood in front of him.

Night has come,—a beautiful night, clear, cool, and starlit! With branches and dry wood our men have made a big fire, which sparkles and flares, giving the camp a fantastic appearance. Waves of deadened noises ascend from the town, and are borne to us, dominated by the hollow roar of the sea. We hear the harsh tones of flutes and bagpipes, the roll of tomtoms, the cracking of musket-shots fired in honour of a

newly-married pair. Then, amid the calm of all things, in the shades of night, softly lighted by scintillating stars, under the sky of velvety grey blue, the pale flickering gleam of a lantern appears at the top of a minaret, slowly rises, wavers, stops as it is hoisted by the *muedden*, whose dark silhouette stands out against the vapoury blue of the firmament. And, while listening in the calm of the clear balmy nights to these strange sounds, these primitive melodies, these thousand various noises, so specially characteristic of towns in the East—while breathing this Arab atmosphere, so voluptuously disquieting, in which the fragrant, penetrating scents of immense virgin spaces are mingled with the acrid odours of aromatics, the stench of carcases rotting on the road, the strong emanations from camels, goats, mules, horses—you feel a sort of irresistible torpor, a great lassitude of mind stealing over you, in which all thoughts are blended, effaced, extinguished, and you sink down in an intense sensation of complete and absolute repose.

ON THE WAY TO AÏN-BOUÏLEH-SIDI MOUKTAR.

Aïn-Bouïleh-Sidi Mouktar, 15th January.

THE weather continues splendid. Just as we are starting Ingram finds that the silver mounting of his walking-stick has disappeared. In making a search, it is discovered that Djebel-Tarik is the thief; and it is decided that he shall be dismissed. Harris, who discharges the combined functions of Kaïd and Kadi, takes out his revolver, threatens to blow the culprit's brains out, if he has not left the camp in five minutes. He is not the man to trifle with discipline, not he! This revolver, the one he had at Sheshouan, is always ready to be taken out of its case, but, it must be added, it is returned forthwith, guiltless of homicide. He draws out this inoffensive weapon just as any other man would take out his watch to look at it and show it.

As our pilferer has received in hard cash more than is due to him, Harris lays an embargo on his *djellabieh*, the only thing of value the poor wretch possesses, puts it up for auction, and in default of bidders bestows it on one of our men, whose wardrobe is in a rather pitiable

condition. The luckless Djebel-Tarik, who has sold to a negress the article he purloined for the magnificent sum of threepence, departs very much downcast, with scarcely a rag on his back, pursued by the hootings of his "honest" comrades, who probably have not yet found a propitious opportunity for abstracting any of our belongings.

His place is filled by a young Moor, Jubilee's friend, with a face of Roman contour, answering to the name of Abder-Rhaman, which is at once changed into Cæsar by Ingram; for, in addition to his many other fads, Ingram has a perfect mania for sponsorship, for giving people names. No sooner had we started on our travels than he unchristened every one

ON THE ROAD TO AÏN-BOUÏLEH-SIDI MOUKTAR.

of our men, and bestowed on them the most fantastical nicknames. The unlucky wight who has just been sent about his business had been christened by him Djebel-Tarik; he had twisted Djellali into Jubilee, Selim had been changed into Fondak, Cassim into Gazelle, a one-eyed man Cyclops, another was dubbed Sindbad, and so on in the same strain. His immense delight was to be godfather, to give a new name to somebody or something. It did no one any harm; and as he found a sweet joy in his labour of love, it would have been a pity to deprive him of it.

We make our way at a good pace over sandy, even ground,

intersected by paths starting in every direction. The fine sward is diapered with flowers, shrubs grow on every side. We meet with travellers; they eye us curiously, and interrogate our men who we are and where we are going.

Tall negroes in red skullcaps and white *gandourah* are pushing in front of them tiny donkeys with atrociously heavy loads. Now a waggon heaves in sight, the only one we have seen since we have arrived in Morocco—an enormous waggon of olden times, like those that must have accompanied the fierce, invading hordes of Cimbri and Teutons when they made inroads on Gaul. It is made of thick planks, fastened to strong beams by rude oak bolts. The wheels consist of two blocks of wood, scarcely rough hewn, joined together by an axle. Six oxen are yoked to this cumbersome vehicle, which is transporting a gigantic beam.

When we come to a pond of fresh water, the mules make all speed towards it, and we have all the difficulty in the world to prevent them wallowing in it.

In the distance, the mountains of Sarsar raise their summits of deep blue, shaded with violet, towards the unclouded sky, and still farther off can be seen the peaks of mountains covered with snow.

The numerous paths end by uniting in a single road of fine sand—a genuine road—a regular highroad, where you are almost tempted to look for milestones. A broad curtain of trees stretches in front of us—the skirt of a wood through which the road runs, a wood of cork-trees, old olive-trees with gaunt knotty trunks, side by side with birches, beeches, and trees of other species. Flowers are growing on the edge of the forest, climbing plants entwine the trees, and ivy trails o'er the ground through ferns, mosses, and tall grass. Orioles, finches, and tomtits twitter and flutter in the branches that are interlaced above our heads. We advance along the fine sand, under an arch of foliage, a shady and breezy route.

Through the glades you can see bleating sheep tended by little hooded shepherds, playing on reed flutes, herds of cows and flocks of goats grazing in meadows, with an air of charming pastoral simplicity over it all.

In the thickets old wrinkled women pass by, with big faggots on their backs, and in the denser parts of the forest we catch sight of men hewing down oaks a hundred years old.

WOMAN CARRYING FAGGOTS.

The sportsmen have alighted from their steeds, and are beating the bushes, while we follow the road at the slow pace of our mules. Shots are fired from time to time, and we hear the blast of Harris's horn.

Now why does Harris sport a horn? We have never been able to make out. To all our questions on this point he has always replied in an evasive manner, which has only left us more puzzled and perplexed than before. At one time we were inclined to think he wanted it to rally the dogs; but having often heard him give a terrific blast when the poor beasts, with ear-drum cleft, were howling with despair at his feet, we have been compelled to discard this hypothesis, which seemed so plausible at first. Could it be to muster the laggards? No; a thousand times no! Forestier and I have been struggling for hours together in the marshes, far away from the caravan, anxiously trying to rejoin it, without hearing a single note of this fatal horn to guide our steps. Was it perchance to summon help, like Roland at Ronceval, when, succumbing in an unequal conflict, he might feel his strength inferior to his courage? I don't think so, for in "My ride to Sheshouan" there is no mention of a horn at all, and yet he was often in dire straits. Selim, on being questioned, confessed that he was not a whit wiser than we were. He had a dim suspicion that "Aissoui" used it to charm serpents; but that was a merely gratuitous supposition on his part, and would not hold water when seriously investigated. From time to time, on the slightest provocation, and far more frequently on no provocation at all, you heard the sound of this horn, and never a hint, never the least sign, the most trifling indication, the faintest shadow of a suggestion could put us on the track, could help us to discover the actual reason, the enigmatic and of course deep-lying cause of these sudden and unexpected blasts, which make us start on our mules, and prompt us to find out the wherefore, perhaps unknown to the trumpeter himself, of this eccentric, boisterous extravagance. I leave to a clevérer head than mine the solution of this mystery.

There it goes again, a blast from Harris's instrument, and we are on the *qui-vive!* I jump down from my mule, Forestier follows suit, and with beating hearts, gun in hand, we proceed in the direction of the sound. It is, perhaps, the last despairing cry for help! Harris, before we entered the forest, warned us, and we still shudder at the thought of it, that the place was infested with brigands, who plundered the caravans, cut the travellers' throats without the least pity, and, a very

serious matter, that a lion was prowling in these parts. Are our friends in their death-throes, under the lion's paws, under the brigands' knife? Is there still time to run to their aid? It is a moment of terrible anguish, but which changes into profound bewilderment, mingled with some anxiety, when in a clearing we find Ingram, Harris, and Marshall, with their fingers on the triggers of their guns, crouched motionless, with bent backs, craned necks, and fixed eyes, round the two dogs, who are pointing before a thick bush. We load our guns, and with the utmost precaution join the perilous circle, ready to take our share of the danger.

"The lion!" murmurs Harris in a hollow voice, without taking his

VILLAGE OF AÏN-BOUÏLEH-SIDI MOUKTAR.

eyes off the bush,—"the lion!" The minutes glide on, nothing stirs, not a roar, not a sound, absolutely nothing! an awful silence weighing upon us, pregnant with dire possibilities. We feel the blood curdling in our veins. All at once bursts a roar, a long prolonged roar, re-echoing like the sonorous resounding of a trumpet, and at the moment when the three valiant heroes, with a stream of cold perspiration on their foreheads, expect to see the lion rush upon them, and yet ready to send their bullets through him, a . . . pretty little tortoise, disturbed in its siesta by the incongruous "roar" . . . of one of our mules, comes out of the bush, pokes its head out of its shell, puzzled by this unwonted din.

Rover, who was thought to be pointing, had simply fallen asleep on his legs in front of the bush, while Don was only dazed. Had it not

been for the timely bray of the mule, the daring sportsmen would still be waiting for the spring of the . . . lion !

This furnished for Harris another deed of daring, to add to the already long list of his brilliant exploits of the same kind—a sort of appendix to "My ride to Sheshouan."

We are at last at the other end of the forest. We are quite dazzled, under the soft blue sky, of an indescribable transparency. The huge plateau, covered with dwarf palms, stretches to the mountains of Sarsar, whose intense deep blue summits bound the horizon. In the foreground, a *douar*, a few huts of wood and mud, and two or three tents near a dusty tamarisk, stand in dark relief against the sky and the mountains in the rear. A rick of straw at the side gleams with yellow, golden tints. A Bedouin stands motionless near the tents, and his white garb is glittering with light in the glare of the sun. A donkey is lying in the shade of the solitary tamarisk. We hear the bleating of goats, the barking of dogs, and the hoarse cry of vultures soaring in the space.

The road draws for some time yet its large clear ribbon through that sea of verdure; then the narrow tracks show themselves again with their endless circuits, and all along you cross with caravans, travellers, cattle.

The plain descends in quiet slopes, on which oxen and sheep are grazing. For two hours we ride through this wild expanse, and then find ourselves in a large valley. Before us, on the side of a hill, behind which the ocean lies, two *douars* are situated, so close together as to touch one another. The circles of their dingy tents contrast with the reddish brown tints of the tilled soil. They are surrounded by thick cactus hedges of dull, almost bluish green. Women in a file are wending their way to fetch water from a distant well.

The Kaïd has just halted. He said a few words to a young girl returning from the well, stooped towards her, and she, with a lithe movement of the limbs, full of subtle grace, lifted with her bronzed arms clasped with copper bracelets the dripping pitcher to the height of the rider's lips. He took a long deep draught; then, drawing himself up on his saddle, he gravely thanked with a nod the child, who smiled in reply, and proceeded on his way.

The sun is slowly setting in the sea, kindling with its last fire a gold and purple sky. Great warm fawn-coloured gleams, with brass hues, are reflected on the sea, flare on the heated soil, and vague sounds are borne aloft, with sultry breezes and briny odours. Ere long the fiery orb has sunk below the horizon; the gold and purple tints have faded in the sky, the lustre of the sea changes into a dull blue, cold shadows chase each other over the reddish furrows, and an unbroken calm reigns over everything.

WOMAN CARRYING WATER.

The women have returned home with their pitchers, their *djourna*. Men and children come out from the *douars* and watch our coming. This great tranquillity is disturbed by the barking of dogs on our approach. When we have passed, the pack ceases to howl; once more the calm descends, and the great peace of the evening falls slowly, with its first chills, its deepening shadows.

The Sheik of the village arrives, a tall strapping fellow, with strongly-marked features, a grey beard, eyes like burning coals, and a wrinkled face of the colour of gingerbread. His son, a lad of ten, named Arvari, accompanies him. We induce him to stay and dine with us. Jugged hare, turnips, potatoes, plum-pudding and biscuits—that's the bill of fare. The drinkables consist of water, whisky, and chartreuse.

Seated on one of our beds, with Forestier's chair for a table, the Sheik—keeping his son, who feels quite scared, between his knees—does ample justice to Western fare. He devours with a remarkable appetite everything that is served on his plate, making his fingers do duty for a fork. He wipes his nose with a corner of his burnoose, and was going to utilise it for rubbing his greasy hands, if Marshall had not politely offered him small sheets of tissue paper.

Arvari is losing his shyness; he munches a few biscuits with his fine teeth, regales himself with plum-pudding, and puts a bit of it aside

carefully wrapped in paper, in order doubtlessly to give his brothers and sisters at home a taste of the delicacies of the *Roumis*.

Just as the Sheik is taking his leave, enchanted with the evening, two enormous dishes of *kouskoussou*, fowls, and eggs are brought by his order as a present to us.

Seven men have been sent to act as a guard during the night. They chatter and shout to each other, and we hear the loud yelping of the dogs from the two *douars*, between which our camp has been pitched.

We have now left behind us the hilly country, the thatched houses, and are going to traverse the region of vast plains, dotted by the dark circles of the *ghima*, scoured by the roving Arab, the Bedouin, as he shifts his tents and cattle from place to place, doing exactly to-day what his ancestors did six thousand years ago on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, proud, independent, ferocious, and—dirty.

* * * * * *

This morning the Sheik is before our tent, accompanied by his men. He has come to pay us a formal visit, and to bid us good-bye.

After shaking hands with us, he raised his own to his heart, then to his lips, and said, "Salamalek oum!"—May safety be upon you! Master Arvari kissed our fingers, and we started off in ugly, dull weather.

We have two Sherifs among our muleteers, two descendants of Mahomet. They are cleaner, and keep themselves neater than their companions. They have more especially charge of the mules, shoe them, mend their harness, and their functions are far from being a sinecure.

It is a very honourable occupation, for everything connected with equine matters is held in high favour in the East, where the horse serves as a patent of nobility to its rider, and horsedealer is a synonym for a man of gentle birth, just as in the West wealth and nobility are equivalent terms, and a big balance at one's banker's is quite as good as old parchment deeds. The Sultans are so prolific, and the harems so numerous, that the Sherifs of pure blood swarm in Morocco, like rabbits in Australia.

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This is a real pest, which costs no little money to maintain, for the title of Sherif implies a sacred character, sanctity in the eyes of the Arabs being a quality of blood, and therefore hereditary, rendering the person enjoying this title holy and inviolable. It follows of course that these exalted, venerable beings cannot condescend to toil like common labourers, and that they have to be supported by the nation, which exhausts its resources by maintaining in vain-glorious ease these idlers with green turbans.

As the Sultans, in spite of their goodwill and their remarkable vigour, have not yet succeeded in peopling the whole of Morocco with grand-nephews of Amina's son, those who are not Sherifs make all haste to become so.

Every right-thinking native of Morocco is a Sherif, and descends in a direct line from the Prophet, just as every Englishman who has any respect for himself is a descendant of the Normans, as every Frenchman, who is anybody at all, has an ancestor among the Crusaders. As soon as a Moor has got fairly on in the world, he experiences the liveliest desire to trace his descent from Mahomet, though he hasn't a particle of relationship to the father of the faithful. So much is it there, as everywhere else, necessary to descend from "someone," to be able to be "somebody." Skilful genealogists undertake for a consideration to find him some forefathers with the pure blood of the Prophet in their veins; and the bigger the sum, the purer the blood. For a few piastres more they will prove that he has inherited, in a direct line from the founder of Islam, a wart on the tip of his nose, a less pretentious mark discreetly located on some fleshy part of the body.

When he isn't a genuine Sherif, or when his means don't permit him to claim a direct descent duly authenticated, he contents himself with a modest collateral line, with or without warranties, which depends on the price, and if, by some dire chance or other, he has neither broad acres nor hard cash, he can still attain the dignity of *hadj;* that is, a pilgrim to Mecca, like our old bonze of a Kaïd.

Of course it is necessary, in order to acquire this title, to have made the journey to Mecca, and . . . "non licet omnibus adire Corinthum." So nowadays not every true believer can make the holy pilgrimage,

even though he wears out the skin of his feet to the bones. Nevertheless, since Mecca is very far away and Algeria is very near, off he starts to Oran, or indeed to Algiers, begging his way, without hurrying himself; and when he has got together a nice little sum, he returns gaily, with a green turban round his head, covered with a halo of sanctity and... vermin, which all comes to the same thing. From this time forth until the day when the angel Gabriel shall come and seize him by the tuft left for that purpose on the pate, in order to initiate him into the delights of Paradise and introduce him to the celestial houris, the title *hadj* will belong to him by the fullest legal sanction, and will be prefixed to his string of names and qualities; and the true believers, as he passes by, will devoutly kiss the hem of his filthy burnoose.

The amusing part of it is that a civilised being in the West—some Mr. Smith, devoted to brewing or some other equally useful occupation, on whom Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, has condescended to confer, for reasons best known to themselves, the title of knight; a half-witted grocer, on whom the decoration of the Legion of Honour has been bestowed by pure mischance; a booby made "Sir," or a scamp tricked out with a stolen particle, a "de" before his name—won't be able to find terms incisive enough to characterise the absurdity of the sherifomania of the natives of Morocco, to scourge with their sarcasms these sham pilgrims, who, however are *hadji* with as much right as they are dubbed "Sir," or prefix the "de" to their names, who became baronets or wearers of the red ribbon by methods similar to those that they find fault with others for having employed in order to obtain the title of Sherif. It's always the same old failing that makes a man behold the mote in his brother's eye, and considers not the beam in his own.

The sky has changed from grey to dark blue, with livid tints foreboding rain. We have been marching, slowly hitherto, through fields saturated with moisture, across stony tracts dotted with meagre clusters of ferns, then up and down numerous hills and valleys intersected by brooks and streams of water. We are now in a sandy region full of ravines, and on all sides is gorse, covered with its yellow

flowers, alternating with heather and dwarf palms; everywhere are numerous herds of oxen.

NASTY WEATHER.

Big drops of rain begin to fall; pallid streaks of light rend the overcast sky. The baggage mules are far behind; we halt for them to come up. The Kaïd has collected a few dry sprigs, set fire to them, and enveloped in our waterproofs, down which the rain streams, we warm ourselves by this transient blaze, which, soaked by the rain, soon dies out.

The caravan has overtaken us; we set out under the pattering rain across the huge, flat, gloomy plain, extending as far as we can see, with faint depressions scarcely visible in the mist, to a chain of hills that bound the horizon. The ground is bare, barren, rugged, with here and there a hawthorn, a shrivelled tree in the midst of gorse and broom. Everywhere water: it spreads, stretching in streams, widening in lakes, scattered about in numberless pools that gleam with a dull, cold lustre.

The sky has become as black as ink. Heavy clouds tinged with violet move sluggishly on, burst over our heads, and pour down their waters in cataracts. The rain, driven by the gale, lashes our faces, the wind howls, beating down the gorse, which sways with murmurs of waves, twisting the trees, which bend till they almost touch the ground, penetrating into our garments, which flap against each other with a crackling sound. Blinded by the rain, buffeted by the gale, drenched

from head to foot, we plunge along in a furious mood for two mortal hours between the waters from the sky and those beneath. We arrive at last, the rain still pouring down, at an inhabited spot. We follow a road lined with tall cactuses, olive-trees, tamarisks, which brings us past a saint's chapel with a square minaret. Our men, in passing in front of it, kneel down and kiss the threshold. Our tents are pitched on the flank of a hill, and we make all speed to seek shelter from the thick-falling rain.

As we are taking tea the rain stops, the sun shines, drying our tents. A big fire has been lit with faggots and vine branches brought by the village people. We warm our stiffened limbs by its friendly blaze, while Ingram, Harris, and Marshall are scouring the neighbourhood in quest of game. At the top of the rising two or three thatched huts stand in relief against the sky, and on some hillocks, Arabs lying, sitting, standing, smoke cigarettes. Women are going to the spring, carrying their heavy pitchers on their shoulders or their backs. They pause for a moment to gaze at the Nazarenes, and then pass on.

OUR CAMP.

The *douar*, a hundred yards from us, half-way up the height, slopes down behind a thicket of enormous cactuses, which entirely hides our view of it. The only entrance lies through an opening, about eight feet high and six feet wide, cut in the thickness of the hedge. The rough-hewn door is fastened, not by iron hinges, but by ties of osier to the posts, which are joined at the top by a rude lintel.

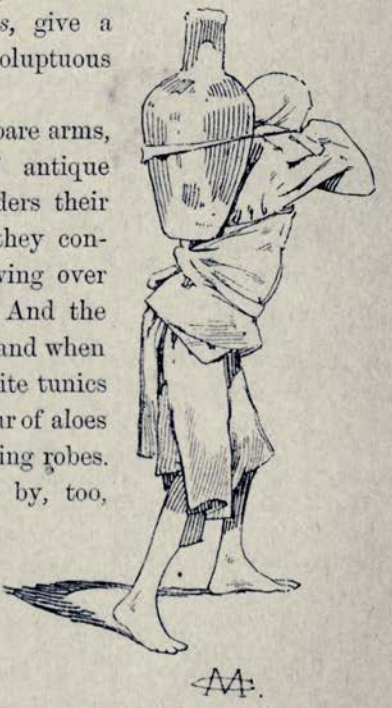
I advance near the gate, where a white-bearded patriarch and a group of children are gathered. Beautiful dark-featured girls pass by,

YOUNG COUNTRY GIRL.

with sunny eyes, supple gait, steady look, and each of their movements is full of indefinable grace. They wear white veils, tied round the

forehead by a coloured band; a short tunic, fastened round the waist by a scarlet sash, falls down to the knee, leaving their slender, sinewy legs, of an admirable form, and their pretty, tiny, delicately arched feet, exposed to view. On their breast, above the tunic, slit at the sides, leaving the arms quite bare, silver clasps fasten the tucked-up sleeves of their *gandourah;* a short peplum descends just below the breasts, which heave gently beneath. Over it strings of massive silver ornaments curiously chased, intermingled with amulets to ward off the evil *djinns,* give a slight tinkle as they flit along with a voluptuous undulating of their hips.

With an elegant gesture of their bare arms, encircled with twisted bracelets of antique design, they maintain on their shoulders their heavy *djourna,* and with the other they conceal the lower part of the face by drawing over their lips the fringe of their veils. And the ardent flame of their dark eyes gleams; and when they pass, smiling and curious, their white tunics grazing me, a sweet and penetrating odour of aloes and virgin freshness rises from their flowing robes.



OLD WOMAN CARRYING WATER.

Wretched-looking old women pass by, too, alas! swarthy, wrinkled, broken, with shrivelled feet and hands, bending under the weight of an enormous amphora, kept in position on their withered, stiffened backs by a cord passing over the forehead. These have no smile on their lips, but throw me a surly look and mutter something between their clenched teeth.

Bellowing oxen arrive, emitting mild vapours from their humid nostrils. Bleating goats, followed by wild-looking young goatherds, plunge in after them, jostling each other in the narrow passage. And when all these animals have passed, they leave behind them warm soft odours of stalls and litters.

In the twilight I make my way back to the camp. The fire burns with a brighter blaze in the early evening shadows, and the smoke ascends straight in the calm heaven. There is not a breath of air: you hear the barking of dogs, the noise of mill-stones grinding the corn. The fire goes out; the watchers sent by the Sheik of the *douar* take up their posts, rolled in their blankets, and all is silent.

SIDI-AÏSSA-BENI-HASSAN.

Sidi-Aïssa-Beni-Hassan, 17th January.

"EN ROUTE!" Harris has sounded a blast on his horn; the Kaïd is on in front. Brooks, whose black jacket, made glossy by the rain, begins to rival our guide's famous burnoose, is musing in the rear, mowing down the plants with his long lank legs. Forestier, very much on the alert and looking less a Calabrian than ever, is performing feats of horsemanship on his big white beast. Marshall is warbling in head-notes an ode to Mary Ann. Ingram is revelling in the joy of mere existence, well astride his fine black horse. Antonio is rolling a cigarette, and the caravan moves forward with gay shouts.

Our route lies along the summits of a chain of hills, marvellously adorned with flowers. Our mules plunge up to the chest through sheaves of gigantic red gladioles, tall violet irises, asphodels with white tufts, and sharp pungent scents escape from these bruised stalks, these trodden flowers, which rise again as soon as we have passed. And this lasts for hours. . . . Then you come across rings of dingy tents, dogs that bark madly as you pass. You make a détour to avoid a carcase rotting in the sun, and you find yourself once more among the tall

flowers, which you pluck from the top of the saddle without stooping, among the strong and pure odours of which you take long deep breaths, the good cool breeze that stirs up the blood. And in this joy of the passing moment you jog on, bereft of thought, unmindful of the past, careless of the future, intoxicated with air, with sun, with perfumes, trotting along under the blue sky, treading on the flowery soil, inhaling the penetrating fragrance. And you wish that it might last for ever.

We are surrounded by a circle of rugged mountains, cut open hillocks showing broad reddish cavities, abrupt declivities with big dark-shadowed erosions, sombre valleys, barren peaks. On the outside, around this wild circle a second line of blue mountains, with quiet undulations, with ever-varying tints, rises in an imposing mass. The sunbeams revel o'er this desolation, warming up the red ochre tints, falling aslant on the sharp peaks, which glitter like bars of steel, shining on the crests, accentuating the shadows of the huge fissures, illuminating with a sudden flash of light some far-off bluish backgrounds, which seem all at once as though they were carved in blocks of sapphire, then tone down to a rosy tint, or melt into great faint mauve hues of exquisite delicacy.

We move down again into the furrowed plains, we stumble down the pretty streams with clammy banks, and we find ourselves anew on plateaus, pushing on through white and mauve rock-roses, crocuses, marigolds, passing through numerous villages. In the valleys we cross wide shallow rivers, bordered by rose-bays, and still the circle of mountains lies round us, seeming to recede the nearer we get to them.

Camels! Here is a file of camels, the first we have met as yet, slouching along with that intolerable jerking of the body, that pitching, insipid movement, so characteristic of them. Their large feet make no sound when touching the ground; they glide on with big strides, stretching their long necks, with the undulating motion of reptiles; their hideous heads, with big flat lips, hover over yours before you begin to suspect their presence, and they leave behind them strong, acrid, persistent smells.

We cross a marshy plain, one shallow stream of no magnitude,

then follow for a full half-hour the flank of an eminence covered with shrubs and dwarf palms, where cows, sheep, goats are grazing, camels browsing; and near a pretty white *khouba*, we turn to the right and reach Sidi-Aïssa-Beni-Hassan.

The mossy thatched roofs, the brown tents, surrounded by thick hedges and cactuses, are scattered along the sandy hillside, which descends in a slightly inclined plane down to an immense plain—the plain of the Sebou—covered with ponds, marshes, and streams, that glitter in the sun. The well-beaten track that runs past the village is

CROSSING A RIVER.

furrowed by the rains and some springs, which scoop out channels in the sand, and pour their waters down below into the marshes.

There's a lively stir in the village, which is a great halting-place. Other caravans are there: camels bellow, horses whinny, mules and donkeys bray; then droves of oxen, flocks of sheep and of goats arrive, mingling with the camels, the mules, the horses; lowing, bleating, making worse the disorder. Shouts and roars burst from everywhere; the confusion is frightful.

The sun, very low on the horizon, sheds still its rays on the earth; a

great purple tint spreads on all sides, warming the green, gilding the yellow sand, reddening the far-off blue hills, and ardent reflections glide on the greenish waters of the lagoons.

On the roads, on the banks of flowers, on the hills, Arabs kneeling on their carpets prostrate themselves towards the east and repeat the article of their faith, the evening prayer.

From the village, slender columns of bluish smoke rise slowly towards the sky. The thousand confused clamours made by the beasts mount on high with a hollow, incessant murmur, like a long plaintive moan, and the air is made heavy with the strong emanations of animals, the ponderous exhalations from the marshes, the powerful odours of flowers and heather. On the motionless waters, gleaming on the vast plain, herons are flying, flights of plovers rise from the beds of reeds, amid which snipe run about, moorhens hide themselves, and numberless frogs croak on every side.

The sun has almost set; the warm golden shades grow fainter and fainter, and as the sun sinks, the shadows of the beasts lengthen in a most fantastic way. Pale gleams play for a moment on the grass-tops, on the petals of flowers, on the rims of stones, glide over the straw roofs, the crest of cactus hedges, lighting the summits of the tents, and suddenly fade away. A great blue and transparent tint falls from the sky, stumping the outlines, toning down the harsh aspects, softening the contrasts, and everything merges in a cold, serene tranquillity. And ever and anon you hear, troubling this profound calm, the formidable chorus of the frogs in the plain, and the deep swelling, monotonous murmur of the cattle penned between the tents of the *douars*.

Our camp lies at the lower part of the rise, between the village and the marsh, some yards from the caravan route. The pickets of our tents are fixed almost on the edge of the road; and every time we hear the tramp of feet near us, with shouts and bellowings, a file of camels and their drivers, we become uneasy, fearing every moment that one of the horrible creatures will get entangled in the ropes and tumble down on our tents, working as much havoc as a bull in a china-shop. Men and beasts, however, file past, and our anxiety is relieved.

An incident has occurred this evening which gave us an opportunity of seeing in what a summary fashion disobedience to the orders of a superior is punished. We had as usual made a requisition for seven men to guard the camp at night, and the Sheik of the village had brought them. One of the men, protesting that the night was too cold, refused to undertake the task, and when they insisted and were about to force him, he drew his dagger. He was immediately seized, disarmed, thrown face downwards on the ground, and while his companions kept him in that position, one kneeling on his head, the others holding his arms and his feet, the Sheik and our Kaïd, unfastening knotted thongs of leather which they always keep round their necks, lashed him with might and main. His hands were then tied behind his back, his feet and his knees bound, and he was laid down in this state of helplessness at his post, where he passed the night, preliminary to an imprisonment of several months.

ARABS IN PRAYER.

Night has fallen—an African night, calm, limpid, luminous. The moon shines with a soft lustre, and the stars glitter with imperceptible scintillations in the blue immensity; silvery gleams tremble on the waters, and far away the mountains stand out in sharp, clear, precise outlines. Here and there fires are burning,

shadowy forms are moving, and in the great silence, when the least sound re-echoes with a strange intensity, we hear the shrill tones of the *gimbry* under the tents, the barking of dogs, the grunting of camels in the village, and from the plain come the strident cries of curlews, the croaking of multitudinous frogs, and now and again the solitary yelp of a jackal mingles with all these noises, while a fresh delicious odour fills and perfumes the air.

DOUAR IN THE PLAIN OF THE SEBOU.

In the Plain of the Sebou, 18*th January*.

THE night has been cold, the dew abundant, and the water oozes through the sides of our tents. We set off under a glorious sun, a lively sky, and here we are again resuming our route through fields of asphodels, narcissi, daisies.

The ground is dry, the road attractive, and so Forestier, Marshall, and I quit our saddles, and trudge on, side by side with the muleteers. We proceed at a good pace, and our stiff legs get a trifle more supple.

We have remounted our mules. The plain stretches endlessly on with light undulations. The lower parts are inundated, forming lakes. covered with waterfowl, which take to their wings in great flights at our approach. An eminence on our right rises, like an eyot, in the middle of the plain; houses built in terraces appear in white relief against the green masses of a wooded hillock. It is Harbassiz.

Our Kaïd returns with a horseman, whom the Governor of the town

allowed him, on his request, to take with him. He is to act as our guide to the Sebou, to the place where the ferry-boats cross.

HARBASSIZ.

The road begins to get drier, but now and again the miry marsh compels us to take to side paths, which are almost as bad. This part of the country is thickly inhabited; the *douars* are numerous, and small cone-shaped huts made of reeds, negroes' cabins, begin to appear, intermingled with the thatched houses and the tents of the Bedouins. The *djellabiehs* have disappeared; people wear the long woollen *haïk*, draped on the body.

A few yards from the road a negro, almost naked, his face seamed with bluish scars, is drawing water from a well, a large irregular hole, with its aperture level with the surface of the ground, and filling small clay pitchers encased in wicker-work. Another one is squatting on the ground with two big jars before him. On their legs iron rings are riveted, to which a heavy chain is fastened, which trails along with a sinister clank. They are prisoners, convicts. Farther on we see others, chained in the same way, working in a trench, with water up to their waist, under the watch of a guard armed with a long cudgel.

We cross a marsh where canes and tall reeds grow, the haunt of moorhens, ducks, snipes. Above our heads, flights of herons pass. After one more tramp over a flat and hard piece of ground, we reach the banks of the Sebou, the Sebur of the Phœnicians—the "Magnificent," as Pliny calls it.

The broad river, with its muddy waters, its rapid current, flows between high, steep banks. In the almost vertical cliff a slanting path

has been cut, to smooth the difficulty of access to the two ferry-boats which ply backwards and forwards from one bank to the other.

Four or five caravans are there waiting, of negroes, Moors, Arabs, Bedouins. Bales, sacks, planks, pottery, coops full of fowls, are piled up on the ground, among mules, donkeys, camels, horses, cattle, the whole braying, bellowing, neighing, bleating, lowing. It is a tempest of shouts, yells, and brawls, when the ferry-boat arrives and each squad, eager to get before the other, tries to take the craft by assault. Some of the men fall into the river, others drop flat in the liquid mud, from which they come off horribly soiled; others, up to their shoulders in water, clutch the side of the boat, and refuse to let go their hold until a severe bruise from the hoof of a mule or a boatman's oar compels them, with many a muttered curse, to loosen their grasp.

Higher up on the bank soldiers in superb garments, mounted on horses richly harnessed, are smoking cigarettes, waiting patiently for their turn to come.

THE SEBOU.

For a whole hour we stand there cooling our heels, but ever and anon the ferry-boat goes off without us, bearing its cargo of men, boxes, beasts of all sorts. Other caravans arrive, and they too want to be taken across. Harris, who has bespoken the boats, is exasperated; he draws out his famous revolver, brandishes his rifle, takes aim at the men, swears that he will blow their brains out, and plays the very devil among the tailors. The Arabs are not in the least affected, and, thinking him mad, they withdraw respectfully from him, murmuring,

in a low voice, *maboul!* madman. And the ferry-boats still plough cumbrously through the muddy waters, carrying beasts, baggage, and people—everybody, in fact, except us. The fine-looking soldiers have got to the other side; we see them land, leap into their saddles, and gallop off.

A SULTAN'S SOLDIER.

Our Kaïd, assisted by the soldier from Harbassiz, has managed at last, by dint of shouts and threats, to make the boatmen listen to reason, and a few lashes with thongs, seasonably applied to the shoulders of some obstinate persons, who, too bent on crossing, were trying to instal themselves in the boats, have produced greater effect than the revolver, the rifle, and the furious fit of Harris, and we are masters of the situation.

The ferry-boat, an old shapeless hulk, disjointed, patched, and leaky, is kept near the bank by two men, who take hold of it at each end, and the transhipment begins. Between the foot of the cliff and the river there's a slough of slippery, liquid clay, where you sink over your knees; our men take us astride on their shoulders, and land us and our dogs on board. Then comes the turn of the horses and mules; a rope is tied round one of their legs, the men tug in front, push behind, and the poor half-maddened beasts snort, resist, kick, and wind up by falling with clattering hoofs into the barque, where they remain in the centre huddled up, stupefied, and

quivering with fear, under the charge of the muleteers, sitting on the side planks. Front and aft, the boatmen, negroes with athletic limbs, streaming with perspiration, seize their heavy oars and intone their song. Pushing our way as far forward as possible, we make ourselves exceedingly small, in order not to impede their movements, and at last we are launched on the yellow waters of the Sebou.

In a quarter of an hour we get to the other side; this is dry, and has only a slight slope, overgrown with thistles. We wait on the top of the bank until the transport of our animals and baggage, which necessitates two journeys, is completed.

WOMAN TRAVELLING ON A MULE.

We set out across the immense plain, with its line of mountains on the horizon. The sandy soil, the asphodels, have given place to fertile fields with rich, black mould, in which grow thick clusters of mallows, marigolds, colzas. We pass through grassy marshes, broad belts of camomiles, whose scent follows us, continuing long after we have passed them.

All along the route we meet with people, we pass peasants with animals, on their way home from the fields, veiled women on asses, holding children before them, files of horses and camels, troops of donkeys, droves of oxen, flocks of sheep.

The sun has set, a sharp breeze is blowing, and we are still very far from the place where we intend to camp. We quicken our march, trotting briskly, sometimes across ploughed fields, sometimes along the narrow paths that line them. Here and there we come in sight of a group of conical huts, a thatched roof, a clump of trees. Fields of wheat and barley alternate with irregularly-shaped beds of maize and yellow clover.

The evening shadows deepen, the air grows still more cool, the

blue mountains in the distance become almost black. In the sombre vault of the sky, pale gleams of stars appear, and all the colours melt into a great cold grey tint, which is spread over the whole of the vast plain, unbroken, monotonous, infinite like the sea.

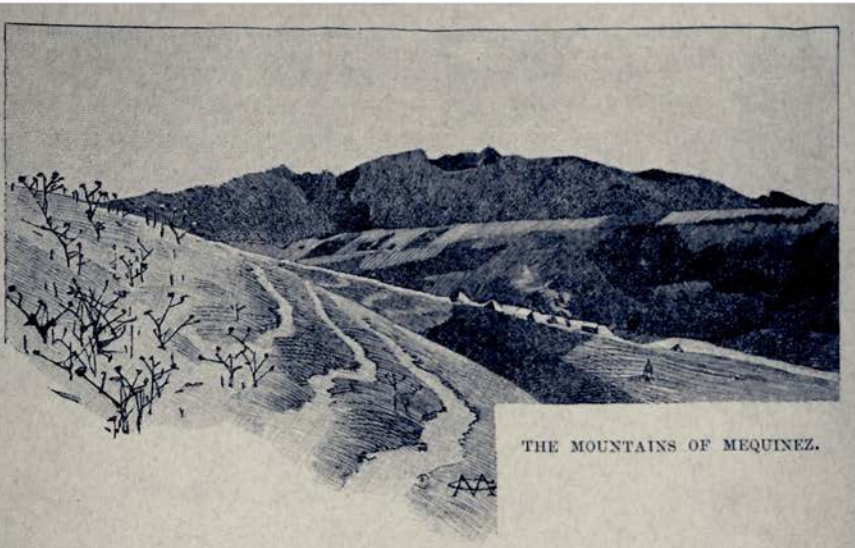
In the darkness we reach a hamlet, a few houses surrounded

PILLAGING TRIBES.

by straw ricks, near some tamarisks and olive-trees; and by the flickering gleam of lanterns, which scarcely ever give any light, we pitch the tents in the vicinity of the dwellings. The site of our camp is a barren waste, without a single flower or blade of grass. The ground is strewn with old chopped straw, dusty flocks of wool, half

gnawed bones, and dried thorn boughs. A foul smell comes from somewhere or other, doubtlessly from a carcase rotting not far off, a dozen lean, stinking dogs prowl round our tents, and the whole night long a frightful concert of hoarse, harsh, shrill voices is kept up, mingled with brawls and lamentable howls.

Since we have crossed the Sebou, we are in the territory of the Beni-Hassan,—an ill-disposed race, so it seems,—unruly, plundering tribes, given to assassination when they can get the chance. To-morrow we shall be among the Cherabras, pillagers like their neighbours, but less ferocious, and more amenable to the authority of the Sultan.



THE MOUNTAINS OF MEQUINEZ.

Sidi Cassim, 19*th January*.

I HAVE found out to-day the cause of the nauseous breezes and all that hullabaloo of last night. On putting my head out of the tent, I see, about twenty paces off, all the dogs of the *douar* ravenously attacking the carcase of a putrefied horse, which they are tearing piecemeal with fangs hard at work. And to think that we have slept the whole night with this carrion under our noses, while this loathsome banquet was going on!

The morning is fresh, the air keen, the sun, the beautiful friendly sun, is shining brightly in the ethereal depths overhead. Again we are in the plain, which unrolls before us with its monotonous and fatiguing uniformity, its eternal curtain of blue mountains bounding the horizon.

We flounder in soft ground, from which hosts of birds wing their flight, we skirt miry pools, traverse drier regions, through mint, tall dry

hemlocks, which lash our legs, thorny jujube-trees. The sun shines fiercely on masses of reeking vapour, in which myriads of insects whirl, clouds of mosquitoes hover near the ground, and in the thicket of leafless trees and slender plants you see hive-shaped huts, goatskin tents with pointed top, mouldy thatched roofs.

We are in a cultivated region, among clover, colzas, fields of barley and maize. A village rises in the midst of tamarisks, evergreen oaks, olive-trees. Some of the houses are two storeys high, and on the walls of yellow clay arabesques are carved above the door, indicating some sort of artistic tendency. Files of caravans continue to pass by us, as well as little donkeys fearfully overburdened, handsome horsemen with haughty bearing and splendid attire, and fine old men on white mules richly caparisoned, followed by a numerous retinue of servants.

The rear of our baggage is far behind, and we wait for it to come up on the side of the road, close to a *douar*. We saunter up to the entrance; we hear loud words and suppressed laughter coming from under the tents, then a nice brown girl advances with the timidity of a scared antelope, and offers us eggs, which she holds in both hands. She is young, very pretty, slim, and finely shaped; on her forehead a blue cross is tattooed, and when she smiles, her tiny nacred teeth gleam between her moist lips as red as half-opened pomegranates. Her heavy silver necklaces glitter on her breast, and her budding bosom rises and falls beneath her white peplum. A tiger's claw and a piece of coral are suspended as amulets to a strip of red cloth round her neck. Her thick black hair, with blue shades, falls on her temples in two heavy plaits, whose two ends are joined together on her back. She approaches us slowly and hesitatingly, and with a lithe movement, full of peculiar grace, she holds out her two hands with the eggs.

Forestier, like a gallant knight, goes to meet her, his lips wreathed in a smile, beneath his thick curly moustache, when, all at once, a toothless old Arab appears on the scene, and with stick uplifted chases away the girl into the tent, and plants himself before the intruder, growling and rolling his eyes fearfully. Forestier, quite unperturbed, bows in courtly style to the exasperated greybeard, and turning nimbly on his heels

joins us at the opening of the *douar*. All this gives rise to a very amusing mimic scene of desperate flirtation, played between us and the pretty girl, of whom we catch a glimpse in the shade of the tent.

In the meantime, two old women, about to wash linen, have got into a quarrel. They heap abuse on each other with ear-splitting voices, and are just on the point of seizing one another by the hair, when the old man, still armed with his cudgel, and happy at finding an opportunity of venting his wrath on someone, comes and puts a stop to their brawl by clutching them rudely by the neck and stationing them at opposite

SIDI CASSIM.

points of the *douar*, after stroking their ribs with one or two smart applications of his *matrack*.

On the road some women pass by, carrying great bundles of sticks.

Our men arrive, and, after sending farewell kisses to the amiable damsel in the *douar*, we set off and soon reach the Sebou again. We proceed for some time along its steep banks. Its turbid waters flow at the foot of a clay slope nearly fifty feet high. On the opposite side, which rises with a gentle ascent, there are clusters of trees in bushy thickets, and you perceive one or two huts, and sparse tents of camel's skin, almost hidden by the vegetation.

We wind our way along a path on the extreme ridge of the river bank. On our right, fields of barley, wheat, clover follow in succession, and bands of plovers noisily fly out on all sides. A handsome old man, clad in multitudinous muslin folds, advances from the opposite direction, mounted on a tall grey mule with a sleek coat and nice small hoofs, caparisoned in sky-blue velvet embroidered with yellow silk. Soldiers accompany him, the long barrels of their muskets chased with silver glittering in the sun; their horses shake their thick manes, and white flakes droop from their mouths full of foam. When the two columns halted and saluted each other, his dark eyes flashed for a moment. Our Kaïd respectfully kissed his hand, which he slowly put out from underneath his burnoose—a delicate, finely shaped hand that even a duchess might envy. They conversed for a moment, then slightly raising himself in his saddle, he saluted us with a scarcely perceptible nod, and proceeded on his way with his brilliant escort.

OLD BEGGAR WOMAN AND CHILD.

He is, so it seems, a governor of some town or other, returning from Fez. He has really a most distinguished appearance, this old grandee, with a white beard, exquisitely neat, lost in the light confused mass of his immaculate muslin garments, perfumed with benzoin and aloes. His haughty, steady look, his grave, disdainful courtesy, tinged with rony, almost with impertinence, have nothing that is common-place

about them, and convey a strong and peculiar "bouquet" of high, lordly breed.

Around us people are ploughing in the fields. Arabs manœuvre wooden ploughs of the most primitive type. The teams that draw them are of endless variety: here they are oxen, there horses or mules, further on asses, or even a camel and an ass, and when there is a lack of beasts, women supply their place. The soil is so light, the plough of so little weight, and women are held in such low esteem—scarcely above the level of a beast—that this monstrous custom appears quite natural in these parts.

A lad perched on a little ass is returning from the fields, his day's work done, with the two parts of his plough, taken to pieces, deposited in the panniers on each side of his animal.

The mountains, as we get nearer, seem higher in the sky, less blue, of less uniform tint; their summits are more distinct, their lines sharper. You discern crevices, anfractuosities, and abrupt streaks of dark shade.

For an hour we ride over land with luxuriant vegetation, through clover, colzas, and lavender, and again our mules trample daisies and marigolds beneath their feet, and trot through lavender-fields. Then we follow the high bank of a tributary of the Sebou, a pretty large stream, with an abundance of fine trees on each side. We pass under the branches of huge fig-trees, old cork-trees, acacias, clearing a passage through clusters of myrtles, bay-laurels, in the midst of flower-bedecked gardens, through groves of orange-trees and pomegranates, and, after advancing along rows of palm-trees, we come in sight of Sidi Cassim, amid the green belt of its numerous orchards, tinged with rose-colour by the last rays of the sun. Like a pigmy at the feet of a Titan, it lies beneath the extreme spurs of the mountains of Mequinez, that far-off range which every day was fleeing before us like a dream.

We have first of all to cross a lake of mud, which extends from one side of the road to the other, and then we follow a dry and dusty street, which brings us to a waste piece of ground, a barren, broken tract, situated between the suburbs of the town and the river.

The ground is covered with chopped straw, wings of fowls, filth. Dark rings of trodden soil indicate the places where previous caravans

have encamped. Our men choose the cleanest spot they can find, clear it as much as possible, and there we pitch our tents.

A young Kaïd, the Deputy-Governor of the town, has come to pay us a visit. He came wrapped in white silk muslin, and mounted on a handsome grey horse, with a crimson saddle embroidered with gold. He is accompanied by an old man, muffled up in a light blue

THE ROAD THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS.

burnoose and a *haïk* white as snow, and followed by an escort of four horsemen, guns in hand.

He stays to take tea with us, and seems glad to see Harris again, who made his acquaintance a couple of years before. His delicate face, modelled like that of an Egyptian sphinx, is full of expression, and his features are extremely mobile. He is easily moved to laughter, disclosing his fine neat teeth, handles everything, peers everywhere,

and plies us with endless questions. A negro boy squats at his feet, and an attendant carrying a lantern is waiting at the opening of the tent.

He takes Ingram's fur cloak for a wolf-skin; and when he is told that it is the skin of a bear, he is greatly puzzled, and seems to ask himself what such an animal can be really like.

Harris shows him his rifle, and explains its mechanism. The young Kaïd takes the weapon, and asks for a cartridge to try it. They put one in, and hand him the gun, with which he leaves the tent, brings it to his shoulder, and fires right into the middle of a caravan about to encamp near us, the ball missing its mark, but wounding the paw of a dog that was barking at the new-comers. He then calmly gives back the weapon to its owner, admitting with superb indifference that its range is very accurate.

A short time before leaving, he shows us one of his teeth, which is aching. Forestier gives him a lump of sugar moistened with a few drops of chlorodyne, and also a little quinine, which he wants for one of his friends who has a fever.

An hour after he left, he sends two of his servants to ask under the seal of secrecy for a little brandy—for his hollow tooth, no doubt. They have brought with them a magnificent *sloughi*, a hare-hound, of which their master makes a present to Harris, and a copious *mouna* for the caravan.

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This morning Harris's *sloughi* has been brought to the camp. During the night he had gnawed through the cord by which he was tied to the bed of his new master, and had betaken himself to his former owner.

We start from Sidi Cassim at an early hour. After skirting orchards, crossing cultivated fields, and a few streams, we begin to climb the foremost spurs of the mountain. A broad track of bare soil stretches away, looking like a wide strip of brown stuff, thrown over the short greyish green grass, that covers a steep ascent straight in front of us. This brings us to the top of a plateau, covered with tumble-down rocks, where the road ceases.

We proceed in a slanting course over enormous blocks of basalt

lying on deep dips, and rounded like the enormous back of some antediluvian creature. These polished surfaces reflect dazzling gleams of light and suffocating heat. A false step of the mule, and the rider would be dashed to pieces at the foot of the precipice. We pick our way into depressions, anfractuosities, hollows with muddy bottoms covered with a thick network of dry grass, plants, and briars, from which our entangled mules have some difficulty in extricating themselves. Halfway from the top we find a large road at one time com-

THE TOP OF THE FIRST SPURS.

pletely paved with rough flag-stones, but most of them having now been carried off. The way is blocked by big boulders, fragments of rocks, mounds of sand. It is cut in the cliff, and fenced by a low, half-demolished wall forming a parapet. The mules can scarcely keep their footing.

From the edge of this first gradient there is an admirable view. At our feet lies Sidi Cassim in its nest of verdure, with its minarets of triple gilded balls gleaming in the sun, its mosques with green

tiles glistening with bronze tints, its white houses rising on numerous terraces, one above the other, while through its groves and orchards the river winds its glittering stream. In the vast plain, the meandering course of the Sebou looks like silver threads, and farther off you can see Harbassiz, a faint white streak of mist. Far in the background, on the horizon, a pale blue line of mountains is lost in the sky.

We are now in the thick of the mass of the mountains. We climb up slopes, descend through valleys, cross broad grey spaces completely overgrown with thistles. The caravans that have passed this way have cleared a route through this vegetation, trampling down the stalks, laying bare the soil, and from a distance this wide, beaten track, contrasting with the light colours of the hills, seems like a large ribbon of dark velvet thrown over a carpet of grey silk.

At the base of the mountains, with tapering summits that extend around us in a circle, the rich and dark soil rises and falls with soft undulations, and big patches almost regular in form, long strips of deep reddish brown, suggestive of cultivated fields, stand out on the pale grey, the faint green ridges of the hills. Near some huts made of branches, columns of curling smoke rise in the air from fires of green grass and herbs, and peasants, *krammès*, are working in the fields. Light vapours of very transparent blue float like gauze over these valleys, filling all their recesses.

We have just emerged from a defile on to a sunny, open spot. Under the shade of a rock an old Arab in rags is sitting beside baskets of oranges. We buy his whole stock for a trifling sum, and indulge in a rare feast of fresh, sweet-smelling fruit.

The *sloughi* keeps well in tow. There's quite a scuffle among our men for their turn to stroke him; they think that his presence will bring them good luck.

For hours together we continue through wild straits, over cultivated plateaus, across flooded valleys; then we reach the crest of the last mountain spur overlooking a charming vale, where a tiny river meanders capriciously, its banks lined with woods, studded with plants, speckled with flowers.

Between us and the river, almost close to it, comes out the dark circle of the tents of a *douar*. From this point, looking straight before us, we can distinctly see the crescent-shaped curve open towards the river, formed by the grouping of the tents, surrounded by a thorn fence. Women are at work, seated in a circle, others are on their way to the river with pitchers; old men are squatting near the tents, dogs are roaming about, and we can hear their barks deadened by the distance.

We make our way down. Near the *douar* we give a wide berth to a dead ass, only to fall across the carcase of a dog, for which his infastidious tribe quarrel with ferocious growls.

TENTS OF BEDOUINS.

The river is on our right, and we get nearer to it or farther away from it according to the winding of the road. Here and there we pass an arch of an aqueduct near a marsh, a strip of an ancient ruined wall, a hewn stone buried under some brambles. We proceed for a short time along a goat-path, on the steep side of a hill, between masses of crumbling rock, heaps of sand, and fording the river a few yards above a line of mossy, granite blocks, over which the water gushes, we halt on a patch of green turf covered with flowers, and separated from the river by a curtain of shrubs. Here we are going to pitch our tents, at a hundred yards from a village, perched on the slope of the hill.

The "guns" are scouring the uplands, Harris in front, blowing

his horn with all his might. Its terrible fanfare has caused a frightful uproar among the people of the village. Under the impression that this strange noise, the like of which they have never heard before, is the roar of some unknown fierce monster that has recently invaded these regions, the men seize their weapons, the women take to flight, the children scream, and the dogs with their tails between their legs yelp in a most lugubrious fashion, and still from the thickets, from

THE OUED-FARAOUN.

across the valleys, comes the vibrant, stentorian, indefatigable blast of Harris's famous horn. Then the peal grows weaker, is lost in the distance, ceases entirely; the terrified natives are relieved, the dogs stop their barking, and quiet is restored.

The peaceful valley sinks back into its delightful repose, its tranquil murmurs, its winsome sadness. The pretty limpid stream flows gaily o'er the white pebbles between its balmy banks of fine grass studded with irises, hyacinths, daisies, buttercups, lined with rose-bays, willows,

pomegranates, sliding under the leafy domes, with emerald reflections, with sweet and melodious ripples.

Immediately after sunset the sky is at once covered with a dark blue, dull, leaden vapour, and on this dingy background the mountains suddenly tinged with a crimson red, glitter with ardent tints like molten metals, filling the valley with their scarlet gleams, as if they were reflecting the flames of an immense conflagration. The effect was singularly impressive, full of a wild and ominous splendour.

The whole night long the men on guard have been singing and shouting to one another. The place is haunted, so they say, and, what is worse, the surrounding district is infested with brigands.

MEQUINEZ.

Mequinez, 21st January.

We have been shooting all the morning on the banks of the charming river the Oued-Faraoun, a tributary of the Oued-Rdoum. We made an hecatomb of partridges. Antonio never misses his aim once, his bitch Mitza has a remarkable scent and points wonderfully well; Harris, thanks to his horn, or in spite of it, destroys a few young birds; Ingram and Marshall do pretty fair work with Don and Rover; Forestier and I have wrought greater havoc with our pencils than with our guns.

After a fearful carnage of fur and feather, who would fain have ended their days in peace in their favourite haunts, we cross the graceful river in turns on the back of Antonio's mule, which Sambo has just brought. Ingram, however, following his amphibious instincts, plunges into the stream with all his clothes on, and reaches the opposite bank as wet as a drowned rat. From there we make our way to some Roman ruins,

rising on an elevation of the ground, the remains of Volubilis or Kasz-Pharaoh, Pharaoh's Castle, as the Arabs call it, without knowing why.

The weather has cleared up, the wind has swept away the morning mist, the sun has absorbed the copious dew, dried the wet copses, hardened the slippery paths.

Of the antique Volubilis there remains only a triumphal arch of disjointed stones finely laid, facing a wall pierced by a curved entrance, and farther on the doors of a basilica. The ground, on which grow, among the dwarf palms, stunted planks, thistles, brambles, is strewn with hewn blocks and fragments of every kind. Bases of walls broken with

RUINS OF VOLUBILIS.

wide gaps extend in every direction, half buried under a wild vegetation. Numbers of pigeons rest on the summit of the ruined monument, where vultures and falcons have made their nests, and eagles are soaring away overhead.

And the lofty Roman town is no more. The bulk of its layers of stones has been carried off to build the ramparts of Mequinez, the holy city of Islam, its columns have gone to adorn its imposing gateways, its elegant porticoes; its marbles have served to decorate its palaces, as in Egypt the ancient walls of Memphis have served as quarries to the builders of Fostat; its columns have supported the

arcades of its mosques; its slabs of porphyry embellished their sanctuaries.

The ancient city, taken to pieces bit by bit, has been transported, stone by stone, over mountains, across plains, through valleys, on the backs of camels, in the *koufas* of mules, and parts of columns left on the roadside still mark the route followed by these devastators of the past, these rapacious sons of the desert demolishing the work of others in order to appropriate the wreck, with the same stupid recklessness, the same heedlessness with which they let their own work fall into decay.

At a mile and a half from this place, in a wild glen, whose rugged heights stand sharply against the sky, the town of Mouley-Idriss rises in terraces on the steep slope, and the yellow ochre tints of its walls form a marked contrast to the deep green of its gardens of fig-trees and olives echelonned on the mountain side.

This town of Mouley-Idriss is a venerated spot. Its *zaouia* encloses the tomb of the most holy Mouley-Idriss Ben-Abdallah, father of the glorious founder of Fez. Admittance is strictly prohibited to Jews and Christians, who would run the chance of being massacred if they tried to enter it in spite of the risk.

Ingram and Harris, accompanied by the Kaïd, have started on as quartermasters to Mequinez, in order to secure our billets from the governor, to whom we have a letter of introduction from Si-Torrès of Tangier, the Foreign Secretary of Morocco. We have also a letter from the Sultan, which gives a right to the *mouna*, and enjoins the Pashas, Sheiks, Kaïds, and other functionaries of the empire under dire penalties to ensure the safety of our lives. None the less, we always prefer to pay for the provisions that the country people bring us, and our Kaïd has been instructed to settle their claims. For some time, however, we have had dim suspicions that he has not paid the unfortunate peasants a farthing, but pocketed a nice little sum at our expense and theirs. We discovered later on that what we suspected was only too true, and at Fez the old scoundrel got such a dressing from the Kaïd MacLean, at whose house we had been most delightfully entertained, that the threat of a sound cudgelling cured him of these little freaks, I fancy, during the rest of the journey.

We make headway along gently sloping hillsides, across sandy tracts and hillocks, intersected by deep and narrow trenches scooped by the rains. We are constantly meeting with men on foot, armed soldiers on horseback, droves of camels, caravans of merchants.

Sometimes, in one of these tortuous galleries cut in the sand, where you can't see five yards in advance, you come across a great monster of a camel balancing big beams poised on each side, digging up the sand with a catapult-like movement. As there isn't enough room to march two abreast, especially when you have one of these unpleasant heavily-laden beasts in front, one of you must give way to the other and go back, and as the camel with his usual obstinacy does not see it in that light, as the catapults evolve in a redoubtable fashion, you deem it prudent to wheel with all speed and turn into the first branch road you can find, at the risk of encountering the same difficulties all over again. It's amusing for the first time, but in the end it gets rather wearisome.

At the edge of a rocky plateau we halt, struck by the magnificent panorama unfolded before us. The steep, barren declivity, littered with crumbling rocks, scattered fragments, cropping seams of limestone, descends to a vast expanse dotted with mounds, bounded by a belt of mountains: those in the south, straight before us, with their summits covered with snow, while farther off, a little to the right, rise the snowy peaks of the Atlas range, illuminated with the purple tints of the setting sun.

In the midst of this grandiose amphitheatre Mequinez the holy, the white town, appears like a vision. It is so far, far away that you can only distinguish a clear, vapoury mass of a pale fair golden tint; you catch a rosy reflection, a gleam of glittering metal, a green lustre from the roof of a mosque, a yellow band with amber shades formed by the line of ramparts; but all that indistinct, toned down, subdued, full of inexpressible harmony and infinite sweetness.

We descend the frightful incline, we climb the hillsides, disappear in confined ravines, and we come to a wooded region with park-like aspects. A large gathering of people, flocks, droves are pressing on to the city. We cross a river, the Rdoum, by a large, old, dilapidated bridge, quite grey, entirely eaten by lichen.

We are now in the midst of the crowd, a feverish hurrying throng

eager to get on, and the incessant, the eternal cry of *baleuk*, howled, groaned, in every variety of tone imaginable, ruthlessly rends our ears. Antonio advises us to urge on our beasts like the rest, for the gates are going to be closed, and away we are borne in this torrent of men, women, oxen, sheep, goats, horses, camels, donkeys, mules, who shout, roar, bleat, whine, bellow, bray. On they go, trotting, running, galloping, rushing in a furious whirlwind up the broad road to the town. Pungent odours, stifling smells are given off from that perspiring flesh, from those bodies clashing and squeezing, and a prolonged peal re-echoes like the heavy roll of distant thunder.

ENTRANCE GATE TO MEQUINEZ.

Amid the surging mass the beams on the backs of the camels are driven right and left against men and beasts like battering-rams. Oxen with wild eyes, and shreds of burnooses sticking to their horns, pant and puff; mules bite each other, horses rear, donkeys kick, and the roaring torrent rolls towards the town, is engulfed in the arch of a gigantic gateway, and glides away into the streets. This frantic stampede looks wonderfully like a rout, a panic of defeated troops rushing madly into a town with the enemy at their heels.

Our Kaïd, accompanied by a horseman sent by the Pasha to meet us, is standing outside the gate watching for our arrival. He has caught sight of us, makes his way through the crowd, and takes us to the house that we are to occupy.

We pass through broad, muddy, and gloomy streets, with scarcely a

soul in them. The Kaïd seems in a great hurry, and leads us, at a round pace, through a labyrinth of lanes. We pass under wretched arches, dingy vaults, and we halt before a low, massive door studded with rows of nails, the door of the house that the Pasha has put at our disposal during the time we are going to stay at Mequinez. The threshold is very high, the arch very low, and we have to stoop in order to get in. In a square, bent corridor paved with tiles we pass through a second door on the left, and we find ourselves in a spacious open courtyard. It is surrounded by arcades, in the back of which are wide folding-doors of cedar giving access into long, narrow rooms with very high ceilings. In one of the leaves of each door there is a second and smaller doorway.

THE DOOR OF OUR HOUSE.

Harris relates with much humour the summary fashion in which the former occupants have been turned out. This morning, therefore, he had resolved to set off at full speed to Mequinez with Ingram and the Kaïd. His object was to arrive in time to take the necessary steps to obtain from the Pasha quarters for ourselves and men. The Kaïd had positively declined to go with them, pretending that his jaded horse could never make such a long journey at a stretch; so El Aïssoui had boldly spurred on his steed, followed by Ingram, and left the old soldier behind him. Harris actually confessed that he was most indiscreet in risking his life, without a responsible Kaïd at hand, on thisroad, where he would be sure to come across fanatics of the purest water at every slip, and where at any moment the terrible Zemours might rush upon him from the tops of their mountains, and then . . . it would have been all up with him and his unfortunate companion. The "Illustrated London News" would appear in mourning columns,

Forestier would rise to the occasion with a striking sketch representing them struggling as long as a particle of breath was left; I, heart-broken, would give a pathetic description of their lamentable end, their names would be handed down to posterity, and . . . the journal would print off half a million copies.

But fortunately Harris's lucky star decreed that instead of fanatics he should meet with worthy traders, who, far from picking a quarrel with him, politely greeted him, asking him to show them his revolver, whose fame had reached their ears, and with this request he most graciously complied, nor could he say nay to them when they begged him to sound a blast on his horn.

At one moment, however, he was rather startled. While fording a river he suddenly heard a furious gallop behind him, which he imagined could be nothing else than that of a big troop of mounted soldiers. No doubt they were the fierce Zemours pursuing him at a breakneck speed. He dug his spurs in the flanks of his horse, who in a couple of leaps reached the other bank, and at the moment when resolving to meet his fate like a man, he breathed one brief prayer and turning suddenly round prepared, revolver in hand, to sell his life dearly, he saw. . . Ingram, whom he had completely forgotten, landing on the bank close beside him, a trifle astonished at seeing him in this bellicose attitude, and, about two hundred yards off he descried, not the dread Zemours, but the poor, panting old Kaïd, who had at length changed his mind, and putting his broken-winded jade into a wild gallop, was struggling to overtake him. After this false alarm they reached Mequinez safe and sound, and there they had to wait a long time at the Pasha's door before they could obtain an audience.

The crafty prancing of Harris's steed quickly dispersed a pestering crowd whose impudence went so far as to invoke all the maledictions of heaven on his head, and whose ignorance was so sublime that they mistook our beloved Rover for a black sheep. He had afterwards presented his letters of introduction to the Pasha, who, impressed by his chivalrous and imposing mien, had treated him with profound deference, and with leisurely haste endeavoured to find the house for him and his . . . "suite."

As there were none vacant, the Pasha's soldiers entered the first

dwelling they came to, and proceeded briskly to turn out the occupiers, bidding them pack up their furniture and decamp with as little delay

ZEMOURS MOUNTAINEERS.

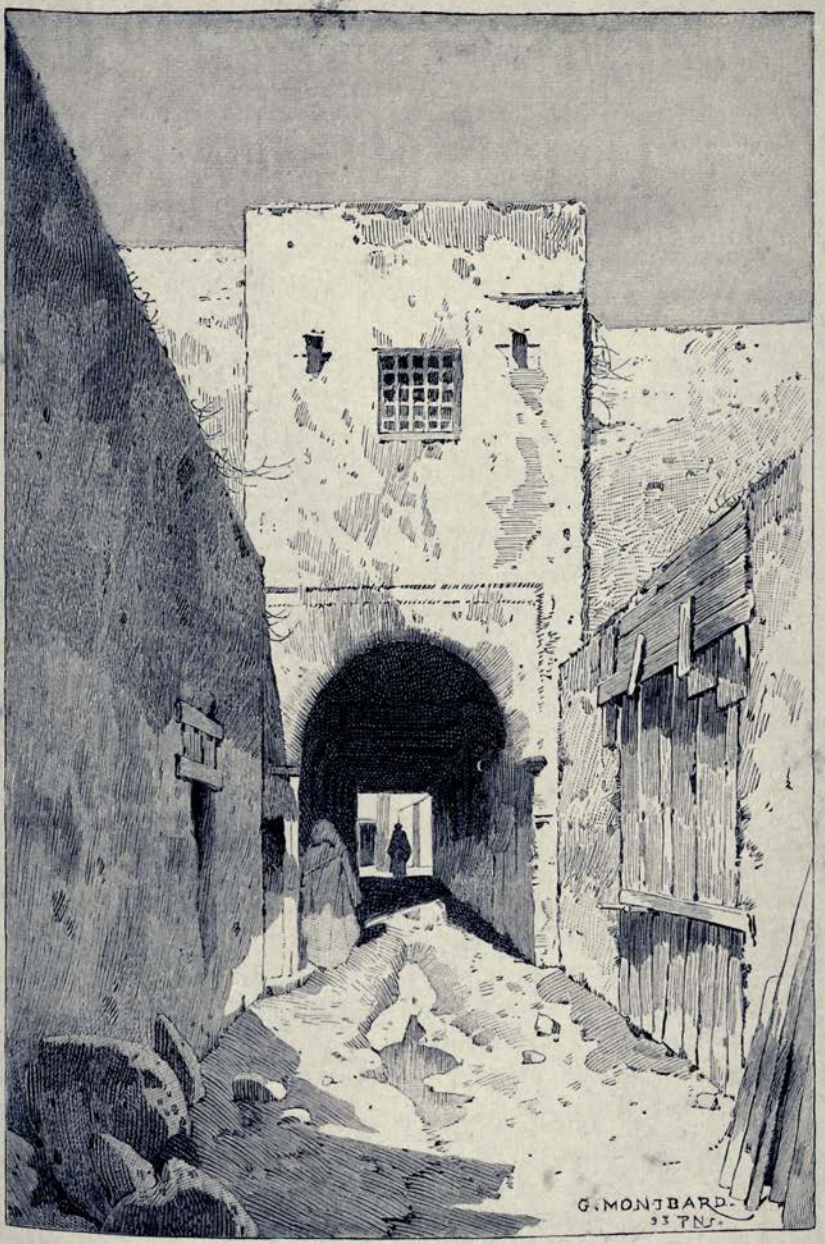
as possible. The poor stupefied people were forced to comply: men, women and children set to work with all speed, and in half an hour they had removed all their goods and chattels.

Just as after the journey to Sheshouan Harris's friends had remonstrated with him for his excessive daring, we too in turn heaped reproaches upon him for venturing upon this reckless expedition, in which with unpardonable imprudence he had so lightly risked the life of his trusty companion and his own. We felt, I must confess, a sort of retrospective terror when we called to mind that we too, without even a soldier to protect us, had exposed ourselves to the same dangers, and had escaped as miraculously from them, but with this advantage, as Harris sensibly remarked to us, with a swift smile, that as we had not been forewarned of the perils, the pleasure of the journey had not been spoiled by any disagreeable apprehension. The truth of this specious remark was too self-evident not to be accepted at once by us all.

The house is roomy and damp. The floor is paved with tiles, green, black, yellow and white. A hole in the centre serves as a drain for rain-water and domestic liquids. Under one of the porticoes we hear the bubbling of a fountain, the water of which flows in two jets from a lovely piece of inlaid mosaic embedded in the wall. In the form of a horseshoe, it is of a charming design, the result of the alternation and interlacing of subjects derived from the circle and the hexagon. Around it is a frame of two narrow pilasters surmounted by a cornice, The water falls into a vast square basin externally dressed with tiles. Beside it lies a big pitcher.

At the four angles of the court are square stucco columns supporting rafters of corbelled and carved cedar, which form the opening of the portico. The gallery of the first floor, where our men are quartered, rests on these rafters. The *moucharabieh* balustrade, with panels of various shapes, is a delicate piece of work, and its lines are combined with unerring taste. On the top of the house a terrace enclosed by a wall from five to six feet high serves as a roof. A completely dark winding staircase, scarcely a couple of feet wide, is constructed in one of the corners of the building, and communicates with all the floors from the ground to the terrace.

But everything about the place is old, worn, and shabby; the tiles of the fountain are falling one by one, those in the courtyard show numerous gaps between them, the graceful interlaced ornaments on the



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STREET IN MEQUINEZ.

pilasters of the doors are chipped away, the mouldings of the imposts are defaced, the archivolts are hacked, the big cedar doors shining with dirt are rotten, the *moucharabiehs* are disjointed and full of holes.

An all-pervading dampness mingled with the nauseous stench from sewers fills the whole house.

The sky is overcast, the rain begins to fall, and our quarters assume a lugubrious aspect.

* * *

This morning, on leaping out of bed, we catch from our dim well a glimpse of a square patch of blue, over which big white clouds tinged with gold are rolling, bullied by the wind.

Some Jews arrive. From underneath their black shabby garments they extract from dirty check handkerchiefs bracelets, silver collars, copper candlesticks, and importune us to buy at exorbitant prices these almost worthless articles. We leave them to effect bargains with Harris and Ingram, and Forestier and I set off to see the town under the guidance of Antonio.

STREET IN MEQUINEZ.

Our narrow alley lined by high dead walls opens on to a fairly wide street. The houses are rather low, and there are wide empty spaces between them. Everywhere are filth, plashes of mud, big blocks of stone interspersed here and there. Shop fronts are fitted into pieces of walls cracked and split by the sun ; their foundations are laid bare by the rain, the closed shutters are worm-eaten, and the disjointed boards of the porches are covered with thick green moss.

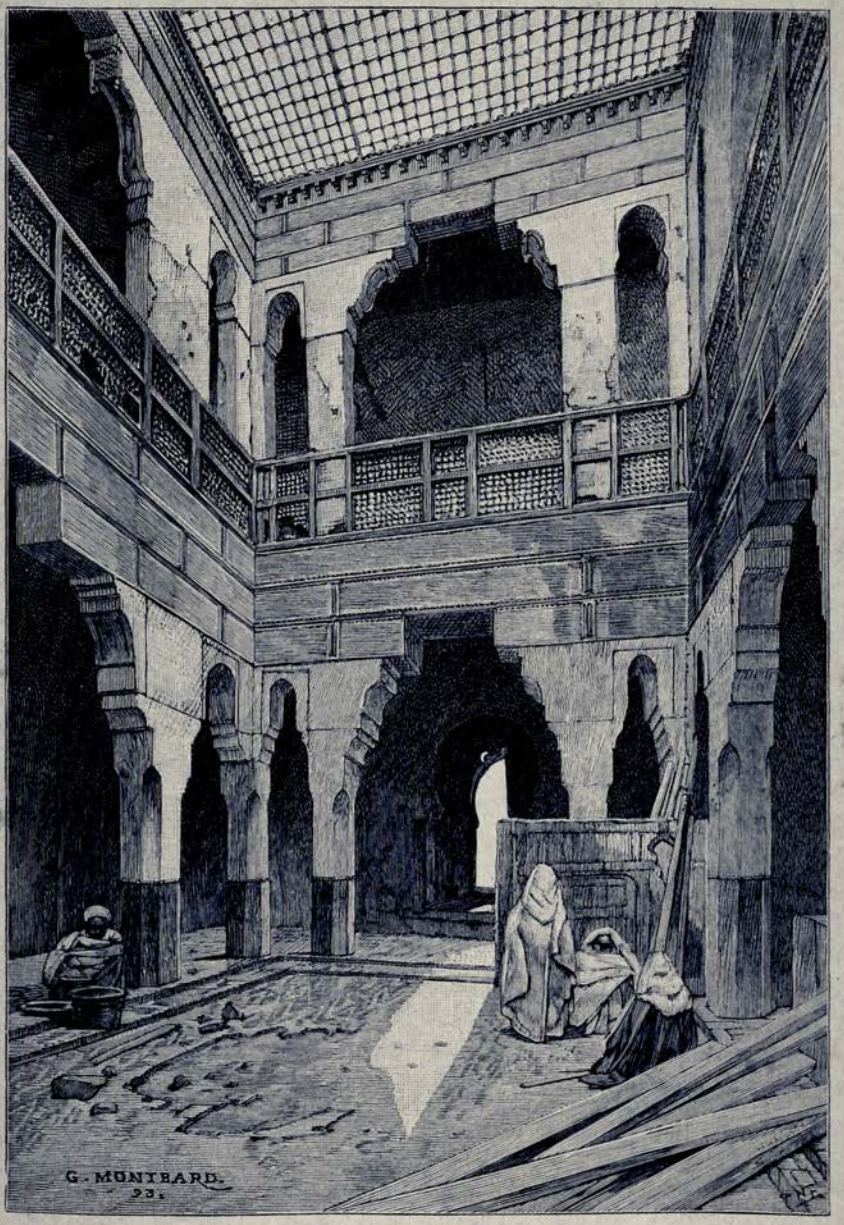
A long plank-roofed passage looks like a dark hole; at the end of it you perceive a square of light neatly defined on a limewashed wall, and in this dazzling spot another hole, the entrance to another passage.

In the square an enormous sycamore shadows a number of rickety greenish booths, most of them empty and many others boarded up.

We halt for a while under a broad cinter gateway ornamented with arabesques of pure design. It opens in a grey wall entirely covered with a lepra of yellow lichen; wild plants, mosses, flowers that grow on its ruined summit, shrubs and thistles that flourish between the stones, lend to it an aspect of utter decay and decrepitude. Under the vault seats of stones are leaning on each side against the base of the wall. A second ogee archway of equal size faces the first and leads us into the court of an inn, a *fondak*. The skylight aperture above our heads is barred by a tall iron grating. The bevelled columns of the porticoes, inside the court, are protected at their inferior part by a wooden case; from their imposts arches start, broken by curves and straight lines, intersected by a triple row of superposed beams surmounted by a *moucharabieh* gallery. Doors on the ground and first floors give access to rooms let to merchants and travellers.

Everything about the place is in an indescribable state of dilapidation. The paving in the court is torn up, on the ground are pools of putrid water, in which vegetable refuse, legs of fowls, some horrid vertebræ, are rotting; the wooden sheaths, ornamented at the top by a thin torsel delicately carved, are eaten away at the bottom and bespattered with mud; portions of the graceful *moucharabieh* gallery, covered with a thick coat of mud coagulated by the rain, hang from the first floor; stucco that once moulded the delicate edges of the arches and pilasters has disappeared, exposing the bare bricks, and on the degraded façades unsightly denuded slabs still accentuate the air of utter forlornness, of profound desolation, that reigns in this damp and nauseous court.

In some of the corners baulks and trunks of trees lie piled upon the ground, and sawyers are at work manœuvring their big saws. Under one of the arcades an Arab is squatting, cooking food on a clay stove.



INTERIOR OF A FONDAK IN MEQUINEZ.

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A massive door that has fallen off the hinges of the second archway has been removed beside the columns, where it will remain for ever, exposed to the attacks of sun, the injuries of rain, instead of being replaced in its former position. Now and again a door opens, an Arab sallies forth silently, shuts the door behind him, and betakes himself off.

We traverse vaulted passages, winding lanes, sombre alleys, between immense, high, severe blank walls, and the desperate uniformity of these great frontages is never broken, except at rare intervals, by a loophole in the form of a cross, a narrow aperture blocked by boards grey with dust, a low door studded with projecting nails. And not a sound breaks the silence of these gloomy dungeons, where our footsteps, deadened by the thick coat of dust, make no noise, where at times a white shadow glides along like a phantom and disappears round the corner of a wall. And as you advance at the bottom of the sombre trench you feel oppressed by the taciturn sadness of these stern façades, these deserted streets.

WOMAN OF FEZ PROMENADING.

We are now near the bazaar, in a picturesque crossing. A part of the street is sheltered, the rest is open; the sun falls upon the walls, and the light streams in dazzling sheets. Parts of walls are entirely covered with remarkably worked *mouch-arabieh*. A few shops are open; one of the shutters is raised as a protection against the sun, the other is laid in front of the entrance, and the bulging framework of its panels serves as steps up to the tiny store-house. The street is nothing but a long miry marsh. We are forced to skirt along the walls, holding on to the awnings, to the door lintels, to anything that we can seize, in order to keep our footing on the narrow dry paths that run along on both sides of the way.

Here is a handsome Moor, with soft eyes, finely-filed and polished

nails, preciously set in the flesh, daintily trimmed, and stained with *henna*. Draped in his white, scented muslin, shod in wooden high-heeled pattens, plated with pointed iron caps and fastened to the instep by red leathern thongs embroidered with rose silk, he advances with slow precaution, carefully avoiding the mud and splashes. He passes close by us with disdainful indifference, intent on the beads of his rosary. He made his way towards a shop, lifted one shutter, took down the other, entered his niche, and squatted in the waving of the transparent muslins of his *haïk*, beside a pyramid of flour of an immaculate whiteness.

We pass by the entrances to mosques, with gigantic ogees adorned with marvellous laces of arabesque. Through the half-open doors, with bronze fittings, you vaguely perceive in the blue penumbra innumerable rows of columns, infinite perspectives of arcades, porticoes, jets of water flowing from walls constellated with mosaics, and falling down into marble basins, corners of courts paved with tiles blazing in the sun.

An iron chain, supported by two bronze pillars, is stretched across the doorway. On the threshold, lying rolled in rugs, horrible-looking creatures, eaten up with fearful ulcers, repugnant leprosy, beg, chanting the praises of Allah. On seeing us they half raise their cadaverous bodies, exhibiting their hideous sores; their eyes gleam with a deeper flare, their voices grate still more harshly, their emaciated features are lit by a still fiercer exultation, and, lifting their shrivelled arms, they invoke maledictions on our heads.

Then we reach the main street of the bazaar, a broad way with high walls protected, by a roof of reeds on cross-beams, from the rays of the sun, which dart through its numerous apertures and flash on white walls with a thousand tongues of fire.

Here, as everywhere else, the middle of the street is nothing but a sewer, but there is a trifle more animation. The greater part of the shops are open, displaying *ferradjieh*, scarlet *caftans*, burnooses, rose, violet, pale blue silk cords, woven with gold. They sell dressed leather, boots, red, blue, and yellow slippers embroidered with silk and gold, saddles, harness for mules and horses, stirrups inlaid with gold and silver, and spurs with points as sharp as stilettos.

Piles of carpets of coarse Rabat and Mogador wool fill the small recesses, and behind you catch sight of the shopkeeper huddled up in a small space, smoking cigarettes or mechanically twining the beads of his rosary, supremely indifferent to the few customers that might drop in.

Farther on are the *okels* occupied by Jews, some of whom are carefully sorting stalks of dried sarsaparilla, senna-leaves in little boxes, while others sell sugar, tobacco, spices.

Here and there a high, grey minaret rises above the cracked walls, towering above the street with its powerful silhouette; its tarnished tiles gleam with soft lustre, and its gilded balls sparkle. Storks have made their nests between the embrasures of its gallery, and they scarcely wing their heavy flight when the *muedden*, appearing on the balcony, hoists the white flag and summons the true believers to prayer.

We pass a high ruined gateway, more wretched than any we have yet seen. The sides of its walls disappear under a dense row of rickety stalls, each clinging to the other, in which hang bridles, bags, belts. In some nooks women squat near baskets of oranges, and Arabs selling dates and dried figs are crouching.

Not far off, in half-tumbledown shops whose decay beggars description, odds and ends of every variety are heaped up: rusty sabres with handles of rhinoceros horn, *yataghans*, old powder-flasks of fantastic shapes, lances, guns, tambourines, flutes, harness, pottery. And all these relics of bygone days stranded there are worn, broken, and shrivelled like the frail old men with dim eyes who handle them with their decrepit hands.

Near by is the goldsmiths' quarter, a number of narrow lanes running out of a very wide, very dirty, very uneven place, with the inevitable stream full of refuse offal. Centenary mulberry-trees and sycamores throw a little shade over the broad road.

The houses are simply low cubes of masonry pierced with a square hole. Inside, in front of a counter of white wood near a forge of the most infantine simplicity, men are working gold and silver articles with primitive tools, and on dusty shelves silver trinkets of extraordinary shape are displayed. These are clasps, on which, instead of emeralds and rubies, false pearls and Venetian coloured glass beads have been

encrusted; heavy necklaces of strange design, anklets and bracelets of the time of Mouley-Ismail, worn out by the contact with the limbs, jewellery from the Soudan. There are tigers' claws, lions' teeth set in silver, with coral pendants to ward off the evil eye; silver flasks filled with *koheul* for staining the eyebrows, quaint, curiously-chased amulets to keep off the *djinns*.

WOMAN OF MEQUINEZ AT HOME.

Crafty Jews follow us closely, and with a diffident expression they take out from torn and dirty handkerchiefs costly jewels, which they torment us to buy.

Farther on are the armourers, the blacksmiths, almost naked, working in larger rooms underground, manufacturing the long-barrelled muskets for the warriors of the Moghreb.

We return to the old dilapidated doorway, which is that of the Mellah, the Jews' quarters, an accumulation of houses huddled together.

From the slimy, shiny soil, raising itself higher and higher by the superposed coats of filth, rotten vegetables, and putrefying flesh, a stench for which there is no name rises mingled with abominable kitchen smells. All these things float in thick oppressive vapours between the sweating walls, where space is wanting, and you feel your heart giving way.

In some squalid by-streets repulsively dirty dealers sell some sorts of repugnant goods. Scurvy, tattered children swarm, wallowing in gutters of stagnant water with mangy dogs. Pallid yellow men, in black skull-caps, with long greasy curly hair, pass by, with shoulders bent and

blinking eyes, squeezed in their dark robes, near some others with roseate faces, black goggle eyes, reddish locks.

Heavy, commonplace women, of a sickly pallor, are sitting on the thresholds, winnowing the head of their progeny; and the flabby flesh of their unwieldy feet falls in rings of fat round their leather slippers.

Through a door ajar I perceive a Jewess with painted brows, black, deep eyes, decked in festive attire. She has a dull, pallid, wax-like complexion; on her head is a pointed mitre brocaded with gold; heavy earrings frame her face; on her legs are bangles, and her wrists are

SQUARE FACING THE KASBAH.

encircled by bracelets, set with stones. The stuff enveloping her bust is quite bedizened with gilded trimmings, and tightly pressed over her chemise, spangled with gold; and her velvet skirt, with a corner covered with large gold embroideries, falls straight down without a single fold.

Through open doors reeking, sickening gusts escape and stick to the walls, impregnating the garments of this sallow-faced people, whose unwholesome skin gives off sickening odours.

We are glad to return to the mournful aspect of the big grey walls, the sepulchral tranquillity of the ruined quarters, to lose ourselves in

deserted streets, in dark passages, where grave, stately Moors, clad in their white perfumed garments, wend their silent way.

This afternoon we set off to see the *Kasbah*. Tortuous lanes bring us to a vast arid square surrounded with walls. On our left a line of huge blocks crops out of the ground, smoothed by the rain, the sun, and the people that sit on them, and runs parallel to a high wall, quite sinister in its nudity. On the opposite side is a lower wall, against which a few shops are built. Behind us rise the crenellated walls of the town, dominated by two tall minarets; and we see, like a black hole, the gateway through which we have just passed. In front of us, forming the fourth side of the square, are the ruddy, yellow, embattled ramparts of the Kasbah, in which opens the magistral gateway of Moulcy-Ismail, the cruel sultan, the great saint, the patron of Morocco.

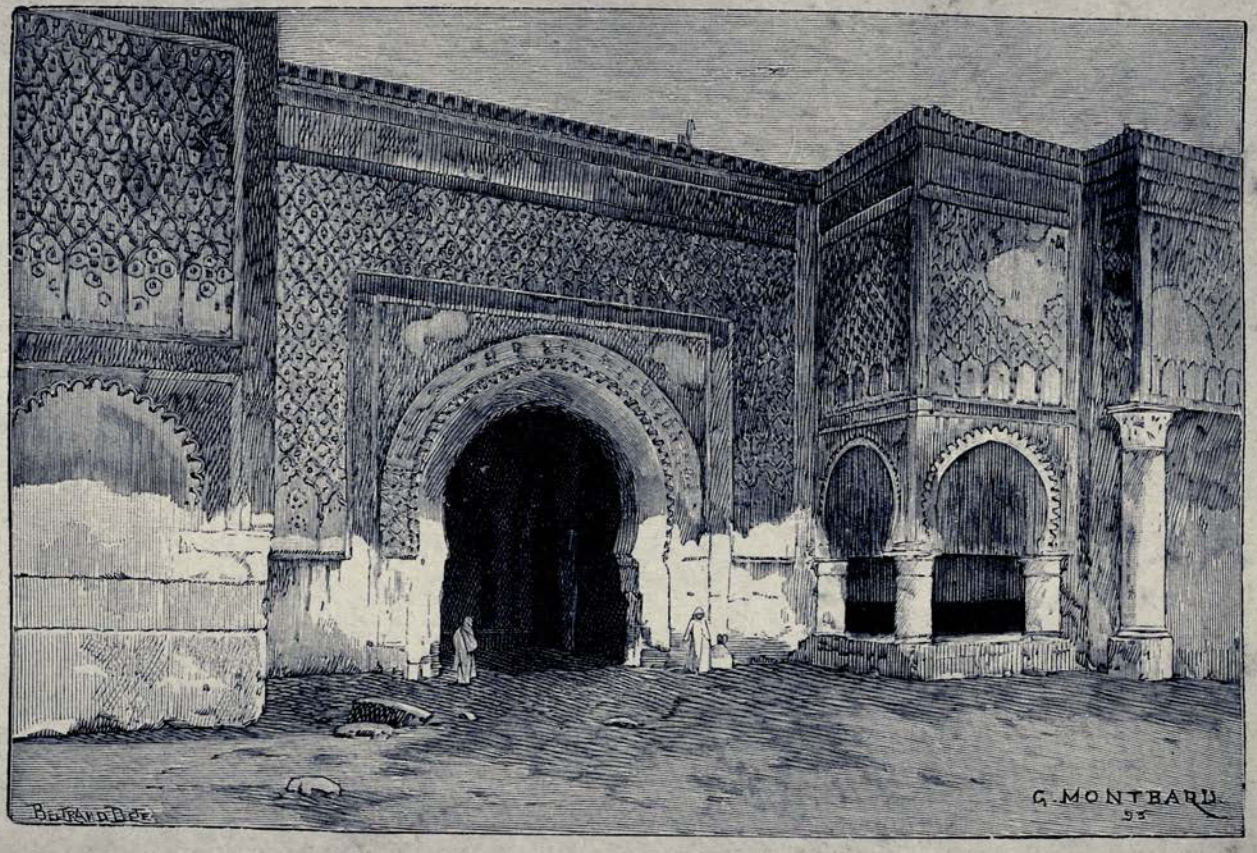
Its imposing mass, interrupting the line of the ramparts, stands out in its robust elegance, full of sombre majesty, between its two square bastions, whose arches rest on short massive pillars of marble.

The gigantic horseshoe-shaped ogee is supported on each side by two smaller columns of marble. A flange of finely-delineated arabesques runs round it with its graceful festoons, and a square frame, a sort of ribbon, on which verses from the Koran are scrolled in black letters on a green ground, separates it distinctly from the rest of the high façade, completely hidden under the magnificent layer of its tiles.

One stands amazed at the perfect arrangement of the tens of thousands of these little glazed pieces, whose setting is lost in alternations of curves and broken lines, intersecting with each other, in endless variety, in a series of geometrical combinations of marvellous complexity, but at the same time exquisitely graceful in their charming fantasy.

The shadows thrown by the relief of the interlaced ornaments play with the shimmering lights falling on the innumerable tiles, subduing the vigour of the tones, softening the lines, bathing the whole in an immense warm, calm, restful tonality, of an indefinable harmony, which inclemency of weather and the *patina* of centuries have only served to accentuate by mixing yet more the shades in one great, neutral, ambered tint of infinite softness, of a grandiose melancholy.

The base of the gateway is degraded and corroded, and the whole of



DOOR OF THE KASBAH IN MEQUINEZ.

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the lower part, to the height of ten feet, has been whitewashed, and the delicate arabesques, the fine mouldings, have disappeared under the successive coats of lime.

The space under the gateway between the ogee facing the town, and the opposite one that opens into the courtyard of the *Kasbah*, is covered by a lofty vault. Here is the entrance to the *Justice*, a little door in a plank partition. Under low arches, built in the thickness of the wall, Arabs are lying on stone steps, and the ground is paved with round, shiny pebbles.

The façade overlooking the courtyard is quite plain, without a single ornament. It is dressed with a thick layer of yellowish plaster, which is falling away in patches, laying bare the bricks beneath through big excoriations. The ogee of the doorway rests also on small marble columns. The summit of the building is partly dismantled, and plants, shrubs, wall-flowers, grow on the ruined fronton, between the embrasures that are still left, and on the top of the wall with which the door is connected on each side.

BRINGING HEADS OF REBELS.

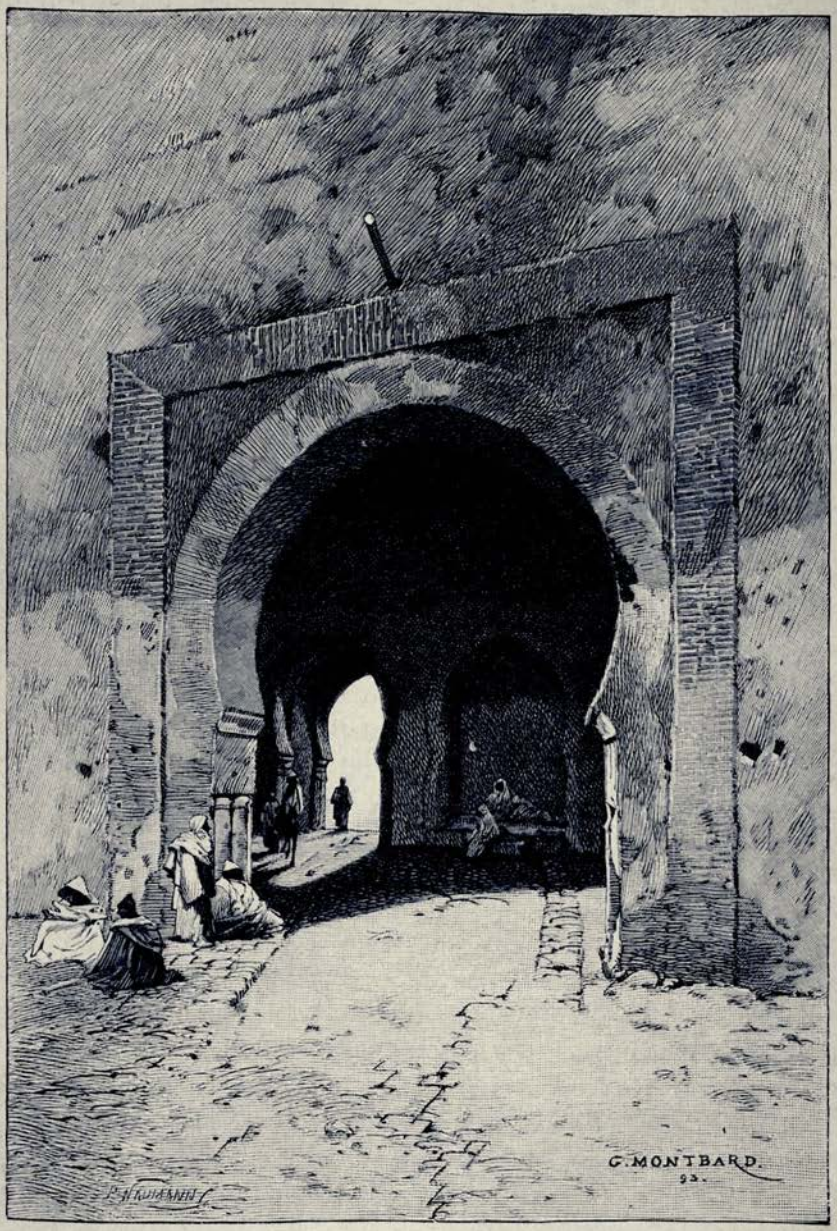
Above the doorway iron hooks are firmly fixed. After each revolt of the tribes the rebel leaders, hurled from the top of the battlements with ferocious skill, are caught by these sinister points, where they remain

exposed as a terrifying example of the omnipotent justice of the Sultan, and the birds of prey come to pluck their eyes from their sockets, while life is still left in the body, and tear the quivering flesh from the bones, and the corpses will not be taken down until the putrefied flesh has come off and fallen on the ground beneath in nauseous shreds, over which the dogs by day, and the jackals at night, fight.

We are in the inner Courts of the *Kasbah*. We pass doorways opening on to large, empty, silent spaces enclosed by ranges of threatening walls. We skirt along interminable grey chinked enceintes, grope our way under rude arches, and arrive at an airy rectangular esplanade surrounded by walls and buildings.

The sky lowers, the thunder bursts, and the rain falls in torrents. We take shelter under a portico in front of a door plated with copper sheet, and fastened by a strong padlock of choice design and of original and intricate manufacture. From there we see, flanked by ruined buildings and surmounted by gilded balls, the green roofs of the *khouba*, in a perfect state of preservation, which contain the tombs of the Sultan Mouley-Abdhuram and of Mouley-Ismail, the most venerated sultan in all Morocco. He was an ugly customer, this Mouley-Ismail. He used to cut off with his own hands the heads of the craftsmen who didn't do their work to his liking, smash the bricks on the heads of the builders when they were not of good quality, and entombed Christian slaves alive if they happened to displease him.

The rain has stopped, the sun has made its reappearance, and we move on from the door that bears the charming padlock. Near by is a hole in the ground, something like an opening for a cellar ; it is the entrance to immense vaults, extending, so say the Arabs, underneath the whole palace. Forestier and I venture into it. The ground slopes sharply down, lighted by the faint gleam that comes through the narrow opening. We roll, rather than descend, the declivity, and stumble to the bottom across the dried carcase of a camel. Vaulted semicircular roofs with massive pillars extend in every direction. Bats whisk past us at every moment, our feet slip on viscous matter, and a stale odour of mould and rot pervades these funereal passages. We make all speed to escape by another gallery that brings us on to the square.



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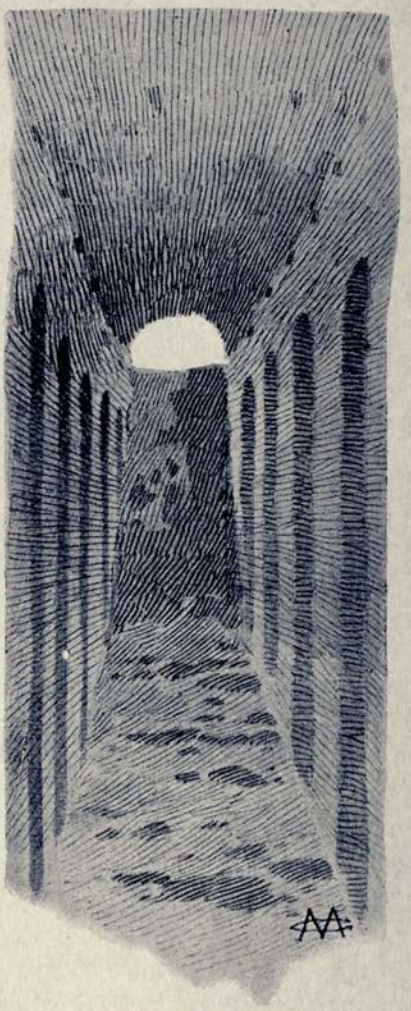
DOOR OF THE KASBAH OF MEQUINEZ FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE KASBAH.

It is in vaults of this kind, according to the Arabs, that the Sultans have been wont from time immemorial to store their treasures, and terrible legends are told of men entombed inside these massive walls, of miserable negroes forced to guard these hoards and remain in these fatal dungeons till they died, without once seeing the light of day! And, in truth, the sight of these lugubrious passages, these ruined chambers, these desolate crypts, makes you inclined to accept as gospel truth these strange tales, in which Harris, with his love for the marvellous, puts implicit faith.



VAULTS IN THE KASBAH.

We advance now along series of interminable embattled ramparts, of gloomy, crumbling walls sapped at their base, and only kept standing by a miracle of equilibrium. We walk through pierced vaults, pass by terraces, towers, bastions lying one upon the other, entangled in a most vertiginous disorder, retaining, in spite of their caducity, their ravaged flanks, a fierce and imposing air.

We cross broad, abandoned tracts and between lofty, sombre walls, enclosing naturally grown gardens; we stroll over plots of thin grass full of poppies, daisies, anemones.

The general tone of all this agglomeration of walls, arches, passages,

falling-down towers, made of sand and lime, is yellow ochre with long streaks of red brown. All these things are worn out, crumbling, slowly disaggregating, and seem to have been cut out of hardened sand. A wild vegetation has taken root, invades and covers little by little the rubbish; mignonettes, stocks, grow between the mosses, on the tops of the walls; thorn, thistles, bushes conceal yawning gaps; gigantic cactuses spring up in the broad fissures; and here and there a fig-tree, a hundred years old, growing in a crevice, bathes with its blue shade the yellow masses scorched by the sun. On every side storks are standing motionless near their nests of dry branches.

RUINS NEAR FEZ.

And still the endless lines of sombre walls, the grim bastions, the bold arches, project on the blue sky the harsh outlines of their broken summits, and succeed one another with that gloomy and oppressive uniformity of dead things, so full of unutterable melancholy, of heartrending sadness.

We follow a round way, broad enough at the foot of the rampart, that winds along shady paddocks crossed by brooks, lined with willows; orchards full of fruit-trees, on which blossoms, in a wonderful profusion beneath the stern walls, an exuberant vegetation. Between the bay laurels, the almond-trees, the cactuses, there are orange-trees, pomegranates, fig-trees, growing with a surprising vigour. Rose bushes climb along the old mossy walls; bird weeds wind round the trunks of trees; witwalls, finches, wrens, and tomtits flutter in the dense foliage, warbling their full-throated

song in brilliant, clear notes; and among the tall thick grass of these uncultivated gardens, gladiolus, irises, and ferns form an impenetrable copse.

We are at length outside the town, skirting a vast square reservoir, lined with dressed stones and filled with clear water, which is almost hidden underneath the broad lilies.

Not far off we find ourselves in the midst of strange and inexplicable ruins, avenues of broken, massive arches with bulky, square pillars in a complete state of dilapidation. Some cows roam in these enfilades of arches, cropping the grass that grows through the rubbish, and a few goats browse on the thistles that have taken root in the crevices of the pillars.

We return to the town and set off to visit a covered bazaar. You enter by an ogee doorway, barred by a cross-beam to prevent mules and cattle from making their way in. Wooden, bevelled columns support a roof with apparent joists; the light comes in through grated, lateral windows, and the ground is paved with flag-stones. The precincts are vast, the shops numerous, but only a few are open, and there are not many people to be seen.

All sorts of goods are sold there, groceries, clothes, carpets, weapons, harness for horses and mules. Harris and Ingram bargain for some pretty things, and get them tolerably cheap. Harris, who has the commercial vein right down to his finger-tips, is endowed with a peculiar faculty for discovering rare and curious articles, and for obtaining them at an almost ridiculously low price. He devotes hours to the task, but at last he exhausts the proverbial patience of the Orientals, and that's saying a great deal, and winds up by carrying off what he has been haggling for. With his quiet, crafty ways, I would back him against the wiliest Jew any day. Right under Forestier's nose, he whisks off, with the deftness of a conjurer, some knicknacks which that terrible brigand, his beard now bristling with disappointment, had but a few moments ago seen in imagination hanging on the walls of his studio. Some amulets of original design, on which I bent my longing eyes, fondly fancying that I had them in my hands, were snapped up in a trice, and quickly disappeared in the wallet

of the faithful Selim, proud of being the depositary of his master's purchases.

If Harris spends hours in concluding a bargain, Marshall, with his lymphatic nonchalance, devotes days to the task, and that explains why he bought only one article at Fez, a handkerchief worth about three shillings, which the shopkeeper let him have, a week later, for eightpence, to compensate him, no doubt, for this procrastination without example. As for Ingram, he bows to the commercial superiority of Harris, and leaves him to do all the bargaining, which he has no reason to regret.

They have spread before us superb carpets of soft shades and delicious designs; they have brought out from dingy nooks silk and velvet garments embroidered with gold, stuffs woven with gold and worked with silver, rare old arms, stirrups inlaid with gold, and sabres with Damascus blades; and we set off dazzled by all these riches, most of them relics of distant epochs, which were produced from their dark holes by these grave, courteous dealers, gliding silently, like shadows, in their shrouds of muslin.

* * * * * *

It is bitterly cold this morning, and snow is falling. From the terrace at the top of our house we see the mountains, quite white. An hour later the snow ceases, the sun appears, and with the sun the good and welcome warmth.

Forestier stays behind to finish a water-colour sketch of our house, while Harris, Marshall, and I set off with Ingram, who is provided with his photographic apparatus, and we wander the whole day through the town, photographing doorways of mosques, streets, and picturesque nooks.

This miserable apparatus of Ingram's—how many times I have vented my curses on it—later on! How many times I have hurled anathemas on this pseudo-artist, this automaton in a polished mahogany or cedar box, this awkward, shy myope and presbyte at the same time, unable to see right through the complicated arrangement of its concave and convex lenses, that infests to-day the United Kingdom with its dingy productions, its livid images, perverting the taste of the public, and

OLD CLOTH BAZAAR AT MEQUINEZ.

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producing, as the consummate expression of art, as the true criterion of the beautiful, a stupid copyline, a deformed and lugubrious picture of men and things!

And to confess, after all, that I spent no end of trouble on the creature, overwhelmed him with delicate acts of kindness, supported his tottering stand; that, with almost maternal solicitude, I helped Ingram to restore to his morocco case this wretched chameleon, this perfidious, spectacled serpent, this ungrateful Cyclops, and thus tranquilly paved the way to my own ruin, and that of my "confrères" of the pencil.

Insinuating himself by degrees into the journal with the timidity of a poor aspirant, he presented himself, first of all, with downcast eyes and hypocritical candour, as a simple document, an auxiliary, something to assist the artist's memory, taking up a very small, modest space, a back seat, relegated into a corner, scarcely noticed. Then all at once, poking out his elbows vigorously, he extended his borders, took the place of others, and strutted about with the impudent insolence of a parvenu, monopolising every page of the paper, overflowing on to the cover, encumbering every part of it, side by side with the senseless advertisements of shopkeepers, soiling, with the veriest platitudes, the immaculate vellum, formerly reserved for the masters of the pencil, who for more than half a century had charmed the public with their original works.

Was it possible to suspect that this shining Pandora's box, so seductive in its exterior, contained in its flanks such dire evils; that this accordion-shaped instrument, which seemed, from its mild, inoffensive aspect, nothing else than a child's plaything, was a terrible engine of destruction, an explosive substance that was destined to pulverise the world of art?

Could I ever imagine that a dreadful monster was crouching like a tiger in a jungle in the shadow of its camera-obscura, hatching sinister schemes, and patronised by the "process," in connivance with the too-grasping editors, was preparing with a light heart the exodus, was coldly plotting the destruction of a mournful band of designers and engravers, elements in the future, useless in a mechanical journal?

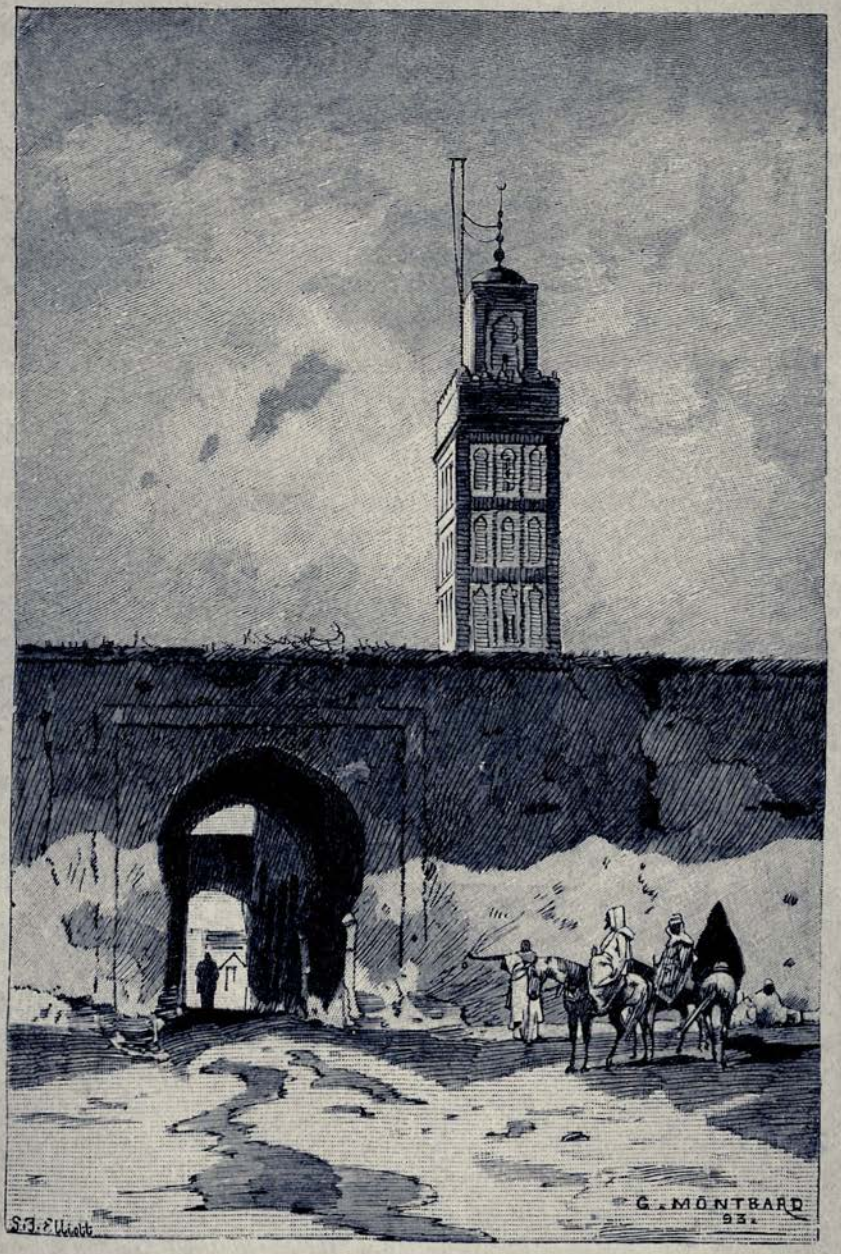
And poor Ingram! Utterly oblivious of the fact that the Tarpeian

rock is very near the Capitol, was it possible for him, too, to suspect, when, owing to this photographic craze, developed into a fatal mania by ambient semitic influences, by clumsy, short-sighted advisers; when, thanks to this sudden sweeping of a grumbling lot of expensive, ill-tempered artists and stubborn engravers, he was effecting a prodigious saving and piling up heaps of money, that the day was not far distant when this glorious journal this well-bred, artistic, and original memorial, would, as well as all his other doomed congeners, utterly collapse, assassinated by photography? What a fall would be there! This beloved and inseparable companion of the enlightened and respectable people of Great Britain and its colonies, this unique and splendid collection of sketches taken from life, these pages quivering with reality, full of picturesqueness, humour, and graceful fancy—the "Illustrated London News!"—this monumental work of art that rose complete from the brain of a creative genius, as Athene sprang in full panoply from the brow of Zeus!

Had he ever felt a faint presentiment of such a monstrous and improbable event, the "Illustrated London News," that giant with a powerful circulation, dying of anæmia, and giving its last gasp for want of sufficient circulation, in spite of the fabulous sums spent in vain efforts to resuscitate its popularity?

How could he for a moment imagine that the public, the very select public that takes delight in turning over the beautiful illustrations, might one day get disgusted with the idiotic profusion of photographs and advertisements, and cease to buy a journal which, after having been a characteristic feature of the times, was becoming only a vulgar collection of portraits, photographs of mere nobodies, an *omnium gatherum* of ankylosed sketches, acquired at haphazard from any chance photographer, a shameless parade of stupid and pretentious commercial advertisements?

Oh, if the unfortunate, reckless accomplice of the collodion could have formed only a dim idea of the disastrous consequences of his unreflecting enthusiasm for the invention of Daguerre, of the result of his fatal complaisance to interested counsellors, and foreseen the final catastrophe that must involve both himself and us!



SECOND NORTH ENTRANCE GATE TO MEQUINEZ. [*To face p.* 158.

But was there ever a newspaper editor who doubted anything, or could foresee something?

* * * * * *

We are going to leave to-morrow. Forestier and I take advantage of a radiant sun to go and sketch, here and there, in the town all the morning.

In the afternoon we set off to inspect the great gateway through which we were borne by the surging crowd. We traverse once more the narrow lanes, covered passages, pass under a dilapidated arch, then another facing it, and fall into a large square surrounded on every side by ruined walls, behind which gigantic fig-trees raise their heads.

People are encamped under tattered tents, asses are lying near a flock of goats on the chopped straw that covers the ground. A large number of square girders are propped against the walls, or lying on the ground, the lower half rotting in the mud, the upper warping in the sun. A minaret in a street near by towers majestically above the walls, and overlooks the square, which is shaded by its great violet tint.

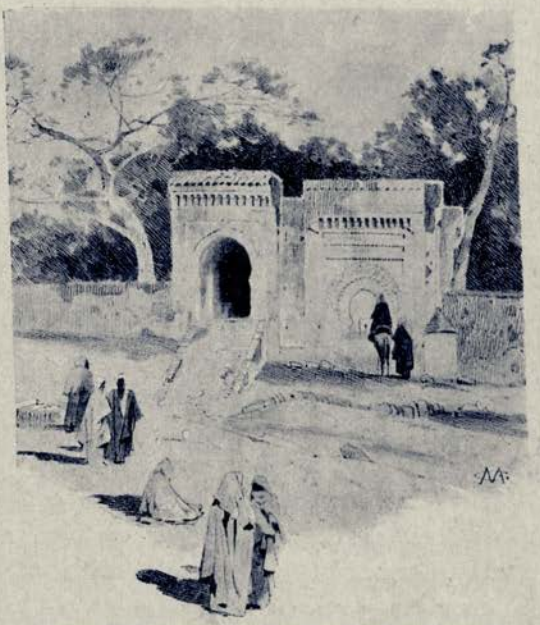
Before us rises the huge doorway, whose enormous ogee stands out against the blue sky. We have passed under its lofty arch, through its tall, heavy doors plated with copper sheaths. When seen from the outer side it is imposing, flanked by its two bulky towers with ruined summits and cracked flanks, its vast contour intersecting the line of the old ramparts, and its yellow mass forming a barrier across the long, broad road that descends to the bottom of the valley. The steep and rugged slope, lined on one side by walls, and on the other by thick hedges of cactuses and reeds, is broken and furrowed, depressed by hollows with jutting rocks, battered and polished by the tramp of the caravans.

It is simpler and yet as grandiose as the gateway of the Kasbah, with its two square pilasters ascending to its top, and crowned by projecting capitals ornamented with pendentives. It entirely disappears under magnificent traceries of interlaced carvings and glazed tiles, entwined with consummate art and a wondrous wealth of fancy,

gleaming in soft, dull hues, melted into a grey neutral tint of exquisite harmony.

Farther away, built against the wall that runs along the road-side, is the tomb and the *khouba* of the venerated Sidi-Ali-Ben-Hamdouch, and its pretty monumental fountain close by.

The ensemble of these graceful edifices stands very clear against a cluster of olive-trees, with dusty, greyish-green leaves. The arch of the doorway in the *khouba* is of an admirable pure style, a simple



TOMB AND KHOUBA OF SIDI-ALI-BEN-HAMDOUCH.

moulding encircling it interlaced at the top, and entwined with a square band that forms a frame around it. Above the arch reigns an entablement with an open-worked corbelled cornice covered with a roof of green tiles overgrown with grass and moss. A paved, sloping pathway lined with parapets leads up to the entrance.

The adjoining fountain, whose cornice is like that of the *khouba*, but deprived of a roof, is built in a more elaborate manner. From the

centre of a Gothic arch of tiles, charmingly designed from subjects derived from hexagonal and octagonal lines combined with a masterly taste, the clear water falls into a big square trough. Around the cinter unrolls an ornamental triple row of arabesques of a very decorative effect and deft workmanship.

We return to the town before the gates are closed.

THE ZAHROUN MOUNTAINS.

Djedida, 25th January.

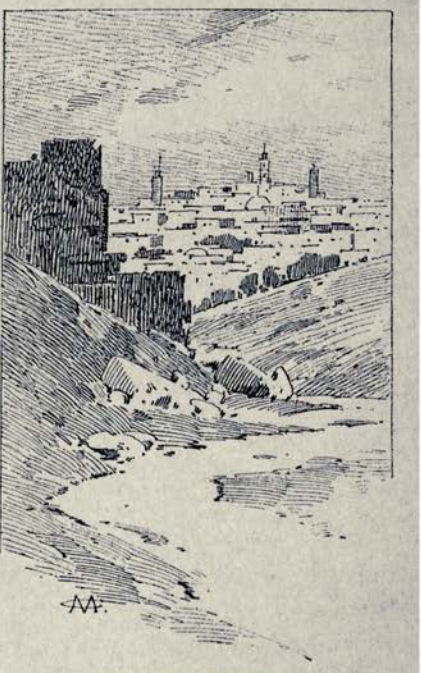
We bid adieu to the "dead" town, the Versailles of Morocco. The weather is splendid. We trudge along by the side of endless rows of decrepit, falling walls, we disappear under vaulted passages, we climb over heaps of rubbish.

Near the Fez gate we descry a group of horsemen on a paved hillock. It's the Pasha of Mequinez with his suite, who has come to say good-bye, and to invite us to camp near his country house, where all our wants will be supplied.

He has a handsome appearance, this white-bearded Pasha, with fine features, in his robe of mauve silk, his *haïk* of white muslin, mounted on his mule, magnificently caparisoned, at the head of his smart soldiers, in garments of various colours, their long muskets flashing in

the sun. Harris went forward and thanked him. The stately old man bowed, laid his hand on his heart, and then, turning round, departed with his escort, while we continued our way by the side of the old tottering walls.

We pass under one more arch, and then we are outside the town. The shallow stream flows over a bed of pebbles among big blocks of stone, bathing an entangled mass of trees and shrubs at the base of the ramparts. Hundreds of women, most of them negresses, are washing clothes, treading the linen with their naked feet, and chanting without intermission. A few men, after rinsing the only garments they possess, spreading them out in the sun, are waiting, perfectly naked, until they are dry enough to put on.

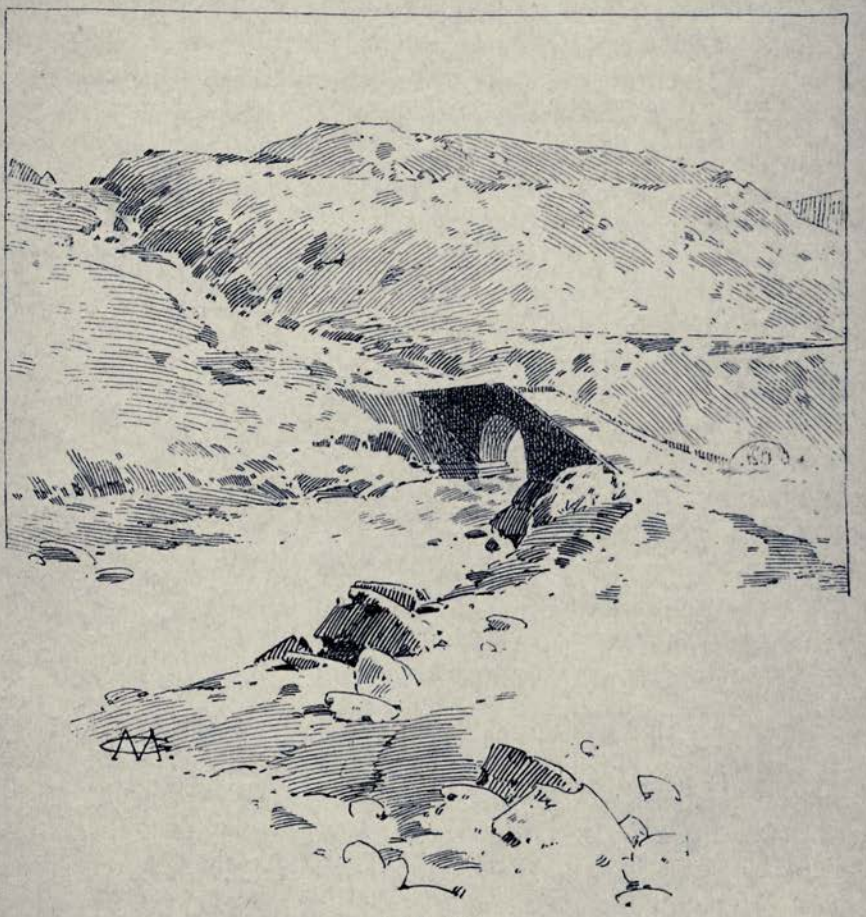


VIEW OF MEQUINEZ.

We halt for a moment near a ruined bastion at the top of the incline that we have just climbed. From this spot Mequinez presents a striking view. Above the lines of formidable ramparts lying one upon the other, and entwined in a series of frowning walls, unaccountable intricate enceintes, dismantled towers with gaping clefts rise in rows, running into each other, piling up in an infinite way, the innumerable terraces of houses, the green roofs of the mosques, the tall minarets, and the bushy summits of the forsaken palaces of the Sultan. And over all this sepulchral whiteness, scorched by the implacable sun, weighs the mournful sadness of the old town, expiring amidst its grim ruins.

The home of our Kaïd is at Mequinez. His emotions at seeing his family again must have been very deep, for he seems quite jaded to-day.

He frequently lags behind, and looks older, more bent, more shrivelled than ever. His sunken eyes, his tense skin stretched over his bones, his jerked automatic movements, give him the appearance of an



OLD BRIDGE.

articulated mummy. His face has such an expression of indefinable gloom, of profound depression, of forced resignation, that you can't help feeling pity for the poor careworn old creature, stiffening on his saddle, supporting with stoic calm the acute consciousness of his bygone youth,

of his exhausted strength, powerless notwithstanding the energy of his desires.

Our men behind him smile maliciously, and the old soldier, upright with a rigid pose, a particle of life still left in his old worn body, moves on, his eyes fixed, looking straight in front of him, seeing nothing with his dead purblind eyes.

After a wood of olive-trees, there are fields of barley between high, yellow, cracked walls, the remains of forts. Then come again the immense plains with dwarf palms, bounded by horizons of blue mountains, and beyond them by peaks covered with snow. We ford

ON THE WAY TO FEZ.

cool waters with flower-bedecked banks, and at the bottom of a steep rocky ravine we cross a bridge with a shelving ridge, and a single arch, under which reeds are growing. At an angle of the bridge, in front of a thatch hut, a negro with empty sockets, from which streaks of blood trickle down, implores the pity of travellers. Afterwards the plain begins afresh with the dwarf palms, the barren tract, its rocky table-lands, where underneath limestone arches with greenish slabs, streams run and flow away into gorges and ravines.

For some time we skirt a rivulet and halt near a hamlet consisting of about a dozen tents and thatched cottages.

In front of us, about three miles off, rises the Zahroun range, with

jagged summits, rent with deep breakings. They are inhabited by unconquered tribes, recognising no authority. The people of the village relate that a few days ago these fierce mountaineers cut an envoy of the Sultan to pieces.

While the camp is being pitched, the Nimrods scour the region round about. We hear the blast of Harris's horn, the crack of guns, and the lucky sportsmen return abundantly provided with game. Our larder is full to overflowing with partridges and quails.

The weather gets bad after sunset, the sky is covered with ominous grey clouds, and the rain falls in torrents. The whole night long the Arabs on guard have been singing and shouting to one another in the battering rain.

BRIDGE ON THE MEHDIOUNA.

Djedida, 26th January.

THE weather has turned fine again, the sun is warm and the sky blue. The country is full of game. Harris, Ingram, and Marshall start with Antonio in pursuit of coveys of partridges, and we take a different route with the caravan and the Kaïd. We arrange a meeting-place not far away, a bridge on the road to Fez.

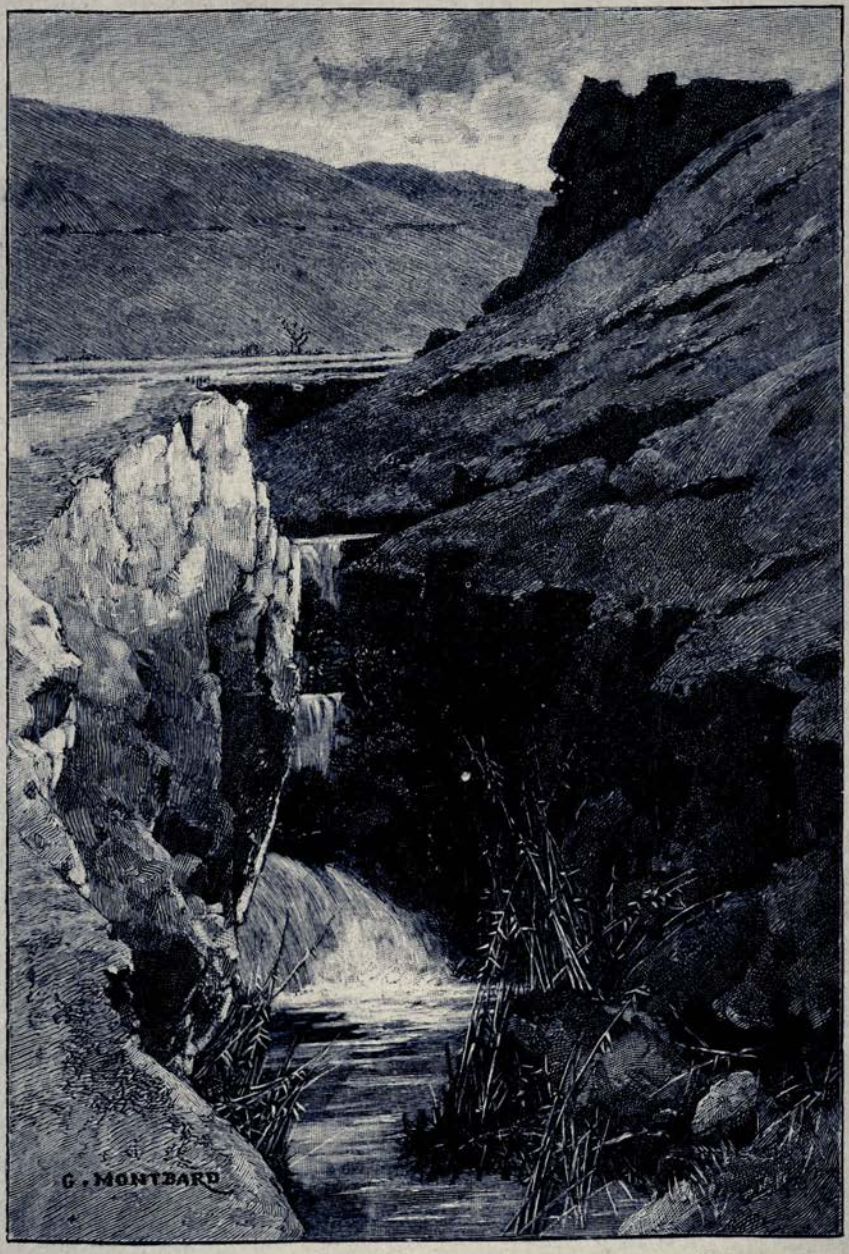
The Kaïd seems uneasy. Can it be the mountains hard by, infested with plundering tribes, that are making him anxious? Is there some other reason? I am unable to find out. He carefully examines the lock of his musket, tries the trigger, primes it afresh, and holds it ready to fire. He then digs his spurs into the flanks of his beast, which, though retaining its immutable pace, has assumed a brisker gait, and keeps all the while twenty yards ahead of us. We march in close file. Nobody speaks; vague, restless uneasiness weighs on everybody. Is there some unexpected danger threatening us? Are we going to be attacked at any moment?

For quite half an hour we have noticed on our right, on the farthest crest of the hill that bounds the plain, an armed horseman, who is galloping in a line parallel to ours and seems to watch our every movement. Now and again he stops facing us, keeps immobile for a

GROUP OF MOUNTAINEERS.

moment, his gun across his saddle, and sets off again at full speed along the edge of the hill, without ever losing sight of us. What the deuce does all that mean ?

The Kaïd grows more anxious, he often pauses, raising his hand to shade his eyes, which seem to scrutinise the dips of the plain and the



THE MEHDIOUNA.

[*To face p.* 168.

recesses of the mountain. And still on our right the dark shadow of the fleeing horseman stands along the sky.

We have reached the farthest limit of the plateau, the mysterious horseman has disappeared like a vision, the Kaïd has resumed his wonted expression, our men have begun to chatter again, and we have strapped our guns across our shoulders. This time we are at last relieved from our fears, if in fact there was anything at all to be afraid of; it was not written that our death-knell should sound this very day.

The slope from the plateau is arid, streaked with broad strata of grey rocks rough with enormous blocks of limestone indented at the top. At the foot of the declivity flows a river, the Mehdiouna, between wooded banks that form a strong contrast to the bare and rocky incline.

From the bridge we catch sight of Ingram in the middle of the stream making his ablutions. A crowd of Arabs are eagerly watching this stout, plump, lusty boy with a fair skin splashing about like a young seal in the water that whirls in sheaves around him.

This part is much frequented by caravans and travellers, who generally halt here. A knot of soldiers of the *Maghzen* are plunging their horses into the stream. A rich Moor, accompanied by his harem, is installed under the shade of an olive-tree; some of his servants are holding the mules by their bridles, others are preparing a repast; his veiled wives, reclining on the grass, are fondling sweet babies dressed in rose, blue, yellow, amaranth and green silk, and many bursts of laughter, peals of joyous shouts resound from the variegated group. A grey-bearded pasha has just dismounted, and his attendants have laid down a carpet, on which they spread provisions.

Above the bridge, the water flows smoothly between banks lined with canes, irises, gladioles, willows, rose-bays, and is lost to sight farther down under the shade of clumps of olive and orange-trees, whose appearance assumes a very green tinge when contrasted with the red-brown colouration of the bare slope. In front of the piles of the bridge are clusters of reeds, whose tall slender stalks rise above the parapet.

Below stream the river preserves the same rural aspect, but two hundred yards lower down its bed sinks suddenly in brusque dips, and the water rushes on in a series of boiling falls. From the top of the

abrupt and almost vertical banks you can see, at nearly a hundred feet below, the precipice, the foaming waters clearing a passage between enormous rocks which lift their black heads in the midst of the current. At the bottom of this steep gorge a wild vegetation flourishes. On earthy and rocky islets, fig and olive-trees are growing among thick bushes. From narrow strips of alluvion, kept from slipping by roots and belts of mossy rocks, spring up gigantic reeds, more than twenty feet high, their tops gilded by the sun and their roots bathed by the stream. Plants cover the rugged sides, penetrating into the crevices, winding round the sharp projections, and a thin fresh blue vapour, together with the dull roar of falling waters, mounts constantly from below.

We stay behind to make a few sketches, but the feverish, enthusiastic sportsmen go in front, dealing destruction to every creature they come across.

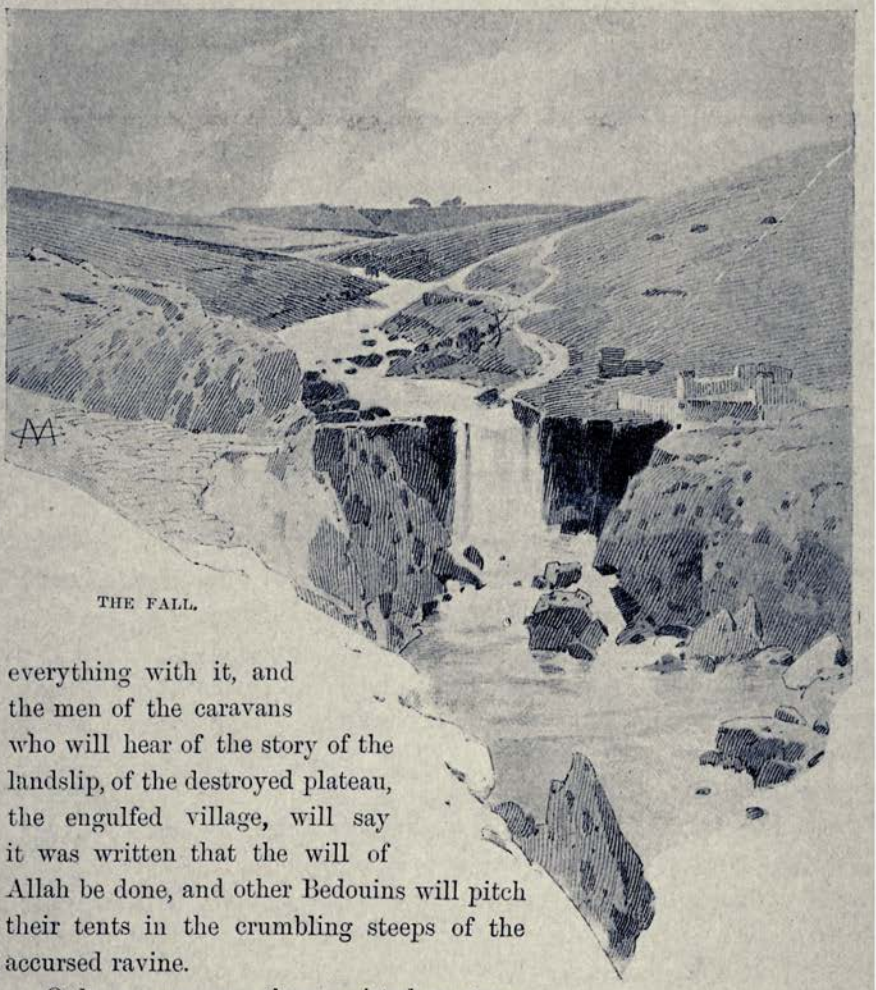
We branch off from the Mehdiouna, and three miles away we come up with Harris, Ingram, and Marshall resting from their fatigue near another river. We ford it about fifty yards above a frightful waterfall three hundred feet high.

This stream is not unlike the Mehdiouna, but wilder, fiercer, and with yet more character. The landscape up-stream is calm and mournful, cultivated fields slope gently down to its banks, but not a tree, not a shrub breaks the desolate monotony of these tilled lands.

The scenery down-stream presents a wild and awful spectacle. In an immense arid plain bounded by a low dark blue line of mountains, in a red-brown clayey soil, a gigantic chasm has been formed, as if in some fearful convulsion the earth had been suddenly rent in twain. At the bottom of the gulf, obstructed by huge calcareous blocks, broken masses of basaltic rock strangely shaped, heaps of stones scraped and polished by repeated frictions, the rumbling stream whirls and eddies furiously, and the enormous mass of water dashing into the empty depths, falls foaming into the abyss with a tremendous crash, howling its terrible and harrowing wail.

On a level plot formed by the sinking of the ground and overhanging the precipice, Bedouins have erected their tents; and at every hour of the day, at every hour of the night, they hear the incessant

thunder of the cataract, the dull rumour of the waters eating away the base of the cliff. And one day the steep rock, undermined in its foundations, will disappear in the surging billows, sweeping away



THE FALL.

everything with it, and the men of the caravans who will hear of the story of the landslip, of the destroyed plateau, the engulfed village, will say it was written that the will of Allah be done, and other Bedouins will pitch their tents in the crumbling steeps of the accursed ravine.

Only a year ago there existed a stone bridge daringly thrown over the abyss. It has now fallen in, borne away by the winter floods, and the ends of the bridge, with strips of paved roads, still remain on each side as mute witnesses of the catas-

trophe. And the indifferent Arabs now cross the ford just as they formerly crossed the bridge, which will never be rebuilt, any more than will be reconstructed the ruined walls of Mequinez, the fallen down palaces of the ancient Sultans, the superb mosques of Islam. It was written, praise be to Allah! for everything is written in Morocco, even that which cannot possibly be written.

Our men are some way off from here, in a village where we are going to encamp to-night. From the top of a hillock we can see them and the mules. We make our way towards them across tilled fields with the sportsmen on our flanks, who let off their guns right and left, rousing all the country-side and causing great excitement.

The Sheik of Djedida, for that's the name of the village, exasperated no doubt by this unexpected racket, has treated us in a very surly fashion, refusing to supply us with anything at all. But Harris, the impetuous Harris, always a stickler where his "amour-propre" is concerned, extremely touchy about his own dignity, and of a punctilious susceptibility about his reputaiton as a man that can't be trifled with, quickly brought the old curmudgeon to his senses and handled him in fine style.

Directly he had quitted the saddle he had called on the Sheik, who, unaware that a letter from the Sultan—a letter out of date, be it said "en passant"—authorised us to make a requisition on his services, had received him with marked coolness. Harris, furious at seeing himself treated like a mere errand-boy, had, with a theatrical gesture, thrown down the letter at the feet of the Sheik; the official had picked it up, reverently kissed it, and put it to his brow. Then after informing himself of its contents he had apologised, put himself entirely at the service of Harris, held out his hand, and bade him welcome.

But incensed at the indignity put upon him as an unappreciated illustrious traveller, Harris had flatly declined all—the proffered hand, the excuses, the welcome,—and in an Arabic jargon which fortunately no one understood but himself, he heaped on the poor astounded Sheik a variety of the choicest epithets, spurning him as a miserable cur, and then had withdrawn forthwith, like Achilles, in wrathful indignation to his tent.

When the miserable fellow presented himself at the camp to renew his excuses and his offers of service, Harris had haughtily refused to see him, and had told the Kaïd to hand to the suppliant a list of the provisions that were to be furnished immediately without any remuneration. The unfortunate man had retired in confusion, in order to procure the *mouna* that had been exacted in such an imperious manner.

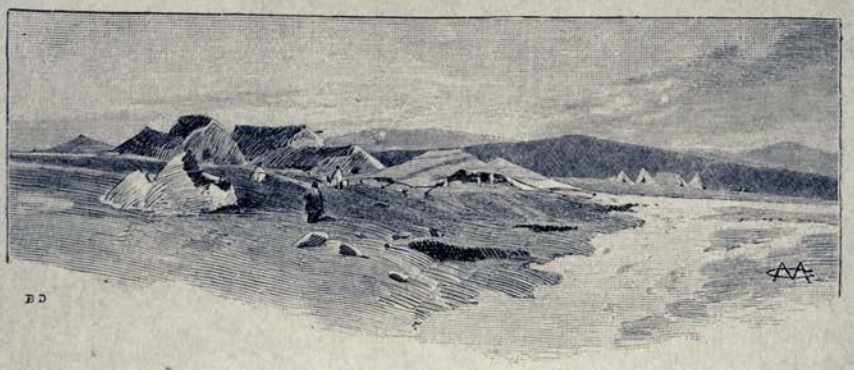
Harris had struck a mighty blow. He had proudly vindicated his prerogatives, chastised as he deserved the behaviour of this vile

A BERBER VILLAGE.

Moor, who had been so presumptuous as to refuse the *mouna* to strangers until he had been assured by a written order that they had a right to it, had been so utterly blind as not to see at once by our faces —by Harris's at least—that we were bearers of a letter from His Majesty the Sultan and Sherif of Morocco.

It is quite true that if from the very first it had been handed to him, he would forthwith have complied with the instructions of his sovereign, would have treated us according to the tenor of the document, and this regrettable incident would never have occurred. That would have been more logical, I confess, but we should have lost the fine scene between

Harris and the Sheik, the theatrical effect produced by throwing down the letter, and that was well worth a slight violation of common-sense. And moreover, could Harris, Al Aïssoui, could the hero of Sheshouan, demean himself so far as to furnish a mere subaltern with a proof of the validity of the demands that he was making? No, it was out of the question, that would have been too debasing, and Harris, for fear he should lower himself, had already got himself firmly screwed on the pedestal of his fame while waiting for a befitting occasion to have his bronze statue placed upon it.



VILLAGE NEAR FEZ.

27th January.

In the early hours of the morning we are startled by an infernal din, and Harris, much excited, and armed from head to foot, rushes into our tent with tremendous blasts of his horn.

He explains in a few words that the villagers have had lately a crow to pluck with a neighbouring Berber tribe, and at that very moment they were gathering all the men fit for service to go and try conclusions It shan't be said that there's fighting going on near him without his appearing on the scene. He will accompany these valiant warriors, will be their "stratège," and will make them mow bundles of laurels. His terrible horn shall sound the charge, and, if need be, the retreat. Duly primed and loaded are his trusty rifle and his famous revolver, the terror of Mussulmans.

We mildly suggest that this quarrel has nothing to do with him, that he is not involved in this village squabble, that perhaps the people whom he is bent upon exterminating may be more in the right than those who are going to attack them. But it's all of no use. He has smelt powder, the fumes of battle have taken possession of him, he'll let off his firearms all the same, right or left, in front or behind,

into the air and into the ground, it doesn't matter where so long as they go off. His heroic spirit rises superior to all considerations, and he rushes out of the tent, singing at the top of his voice: "Forwards, all ye good men and true! Forwards! by Jingo! up and at them!"

Fancying for a moment he is slightly deranged, or suffering from a sunstroke, we follow him in order to avert, if possible, the disastrous consequences of this bloodthirsty feeling, this unaccountable fit of martial fury.

What he said is quite true. The whole village is under arms. Tall, strapping, bronzed fellows, with hardly any clothes on, armed with long guns encircled with copper bands, are moving about and talking with great animation. With his carbine slung across his shoulder, his revolver in hand, and his case crammed with cartridges, Harris moves from group to group, haranguing the men, and offers to share their perilous enterprise. They examine his gun, his revolver, his cartridges, his horn, his knife, and the stalwart fellows scan his figure with a grimace of disdain. They will be very pleased to borrow his weapons, but they flatly decline to encumber themselves with his person.

Our Kaïd comes to the rescue. He warns the Sheik, who hasn't forgotten the dressing he got last evening, that if anything happens to Harris, he will be held responsible for it. Accordingly, our impulsive companion arrives, after duly considering the matter, at this conclusion, that he will certainly serve as a target for both sides. His warlike fever abates, and while deeply regretting that he is not able to utilise this superb opportunity of adding a fresh leaf to his crown of laurels, he yields to our pressing solicitations, and allows himself to be dragged away by Ingram, who wants to photograph the wild ravine, and the soldiers set off laughing on their expedition.

Profiting by the departure of the warriors, the women, freed from any restraint on their curiosity, gather together with shoals of children from every nook and corner of the village, in order to inspect the *roumis*.

In the meantime Harris and Ingram return and seize the occasion to photograph a few groups. Though terrified at first by this big black spider, which glares at them with its one solitary eye, they soon get

used to it, and even proceed to treat it with a familiarity that bodes ill for its stability. In spite of that Ingram succeeds in taking some fine typical groups.

We set out between thick rows of women, children, and old men, and follow paths skirting fields of barley and colzas. Then the cultivated region ceases, wild plants make their appearance, and before us stretches a vast plain lowering down in a very slight incline, bounded by the Zahroun chain of admirably transparent blue.

The broad expanse of asphodels reappear, the endless tracts of dwarf palms, the fresh streams, the little lakes with flower-clad banks, the clear pools gleaming in the sun. The ridges succeed one another like the crests of frozen billows, and the breeze sweeps over us laden with the strong odours of plants and flowers.

Tufted larks run on every side, almost under the feet of the mules. Near some pools, lost in bulrushes, herons rest rigid on one foot, their beaks warmly ensconced under the down of their wings.

At long intervals you notice brown patches cut out on the emerald tints of the vast grass-land. They are fields cultivated by the inhabitants of the *douars*, whose sombre tents with pointed roofs you perceive in the distance.

All along the route we meet with numbers of people and animals, soldiers on horseback, veiled women on mules, asses, camels, horses, and always in front of us extend far-off blue mountains and the snowy peaks of the Atlas.

We are near a river with a placid current and clear shallow water. The grassy banks are covered with flowers; shrubs, reeds, and beds of bulrushes form islets in the middle of the stream. There is a bridge, a fine bridge with several arches almost intact, decorated with mosaics, surrounded by layers of pale dead-green tiles, on which unroll in black letters, in a winding calligraphy, verses from the Koran. The parapet is adorned by interlaced mouldings corroded by lichen and the rain. The bases of the piers are hidden by a network of grass, thistles, shrubs, which sprout from the interstices between the stones. Amid bushes and cactuses a tall palm-tree rises towards the parapet, side by side with an old twisted fig-tree, its long narrow shadow falling on the grassy soil dotted with daisies.

We notice on one of the banks foundations of grey stones with ruddy streaks and patches of yellow lichen; strips of creviced walls over which vines and jessamines climb; dressed jagged stones lying in the fine grass, and in the nooks and corners of the walls are entangled thick masses of shrubs, of plants, of flowers.

There's not a breath of air stirring, a profound calm reigns over the broad plain, and in the endless vault of the sky the sun slowly descends in its dazzling splendour, bathing with golden gleams the great melancholy of things. The green are shaded with warm tints; amber-colour

BRIDGE NEAR FEZ.

glazings run on the old grey walls; dull lights glide along the interlaced mouldings, shining over the old tarnished mosaics, reflecting on the immobile waters; the denuded blue mountain tops are lined with thin scarlet fringes, and far away in the south the ices of the Atlas glitter in rosy hues in the purple-tinted sky.

The caravan, which had fallen behind, now overtakes us. We pursue our way for some time longer along half-hidden paths, through the midst of dwarf palms, and the plain of Fez stretches away before us, a vast

green plain, from the midst of which spring here and there solitary eyots of red-brown.

We pass some ploughed fields, turn to the left into a path lined with trees and quick hedges, over which asses stretch their curious heads, oxen gaze at us with their big melancholy eyes. We hear the snorting of horses, and get within sight of a village.

Large holes level with the ground like pit-mouths appear in several places; they are empty *silos*, and as the twilight falls we advance more and more cautiously. Marshall has nearly fallen into one of them, which was completely concealed under brambles and thorns.

The village consists of a few thatched cottages and of brown colour tents streaked with black bands made of goat-hair. A little farther off we perceive another village standing in clear relief against the blue background of a chain of hills. Between these and the camp, lakes, or rather big ponds, extend, surrounded by bulrushes, marshes, and bogs. On the other side of the lakes, very far away, you distinguish bare, ruddy hillocks, a narrow line of trees of bluish green, the Sultan's gardens near Fez, and far behind all these the Atlas, with its eternal snow, the whole bathed in a great neutral shade, soft and harmonious, brought by the deepening twilight with its dewy and shivering freshness.

* * * * *

The night has been cold, white frost lies on the shrubs, and stiffens the grass. But the radiant sun appears, melting the light coats of ice, and the trembling drops evaporate in transparent vapours, in blue spaces, the softened grass bends under the warm breath of the breeze, and the leaves flutter on the supple branches. Myriads of imperceptible tiny winged beings whirl desperately, filling the air with their ceaseless buzzing. Far aloft larks are soaring out of sight, chafing their numbed wings, and only a faint echo of their morning song reaches our ears.

On the lakes hosts of geese, ducks, plovers are disporting themselves, and from among the rushes snipes start, and bustards wing their heavy flight.

In the village we hear the prolonged lowing of oxen. Men are setting out to work in the fields, women are tending the cares of their households, milking cows, fetching water from the spring hard by,

grinding corn between two stones, weaving coarse stuffs of goat or camel hair; children are playing, and tall old gaunt men, clad in woollen haïks, standing, leaning against the walls, or squatting on the ground with their long sticks beside them, are basking in the sun.

And then a feeling of intense felicity steals over you, and a violent desire to live for ever this simple, healthy country life, that flows tranquilly, uniformly, immutably, to-day as it was yesterday, as it will be to-morrow, and as it will be for ever.

The route of the caravans lies between the *douar* and our tents, and horsemen, foot-soldiers, files of camels, and flocks of sheep are constantly passing by.

A troup of men on camels advances, preceded by a grey-bearded negro in a white turban, and followed by an escort of horsemen. Men, bareheaded and nearly naked, are tied on the camels; heavy chains are fastened to their ankles and wrists, and streams of blood run from wide tears produced by the constant friction of the rings against the flesh. They are the chiefs of rebel tribes, Beni-M'ter, who are being taken to Morocco; and for days and months under a broiling sun, over barren regions, across wild ravines, they will go miles, in order to end their wretched days in a loathsome dungeon. And on they are driven, their energetic heads proudly erect, and a grim expression on their fierce faces, accepting their fate with that passive resignation to the will of Allah, before which the whole world of Islam bows without a murmur.

The victims of the Sultan's wrath have passed, and the sportsmen have returned "bredouille," or nearly so, and not in the best of humour. Harris is in a lamentable state, jaded, covered with mud from top to toe, and considerably vexed. He was pursuing some birds in the marshes, and riddled with shot the nozzle of a cow projecting between the reeds, having taken it for a bustard.

After we have finished dinner, our men rush in to tell us that a fire has broken out in one of the houses in the village. We run to the spot, carrying lanterns, for the night is pitch dark, and a score of times we risk falling into the yawning *silos*. When we get to the place, we see the men lifting their arms, invoking the name of Allah; the women

wail, the children scream, and they all keep staring at the flames without making the least effort to arrest their progress. The one exception was an old woman with a child clinging to her back; she filled a small wooden bowl with water from a jar, and poured it on the raging fire, with the only result to make the flames burn brighter.

Antonio was one of the first to arrive on the spot; our men have brought pails, and under his guidance everybody sets to work, and in a few moments the fire is extinguished.

THE POOLS NEAR FEZ.

Fez, Tuesday, 29th January.

For some days we have ceased to be charmed with Marshall's crystalline-toned voice, chanting the praises of "Mary Ann."

In consequence of his obstinate refusal, in spite of our repeated remonstrances, to cover himself with a sufficient number of blankets at night, and also of his reckless dietary laws, for he used to devour half-ripe oranges wholesale, he is now suffering from dysentery, which has brought him down very much.

This morning we came across, at a bend of a path, our old Kaïd, engaged in washing his clothes. He had laid his gun, his sabre, his bag, in fact all his warlike accoutrements, on the ground. His horse, tied to a bush, was nibbling the leaves with the tips of his lips, and he with naked feet and bare head, by the side of a pail of soapsuds, was hopping in rather a lame fashion on his wretched dripping toggery.

A few articles already washed were spread out on a hawthorn hedge to dry. When seen from a distance in this guise, treading the pile of white linen with his bony lank legs, his burnoose tucked half way up his

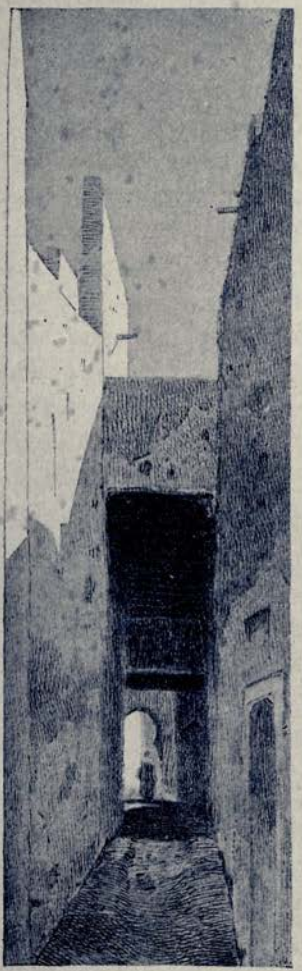
thigh, his bald pate glistening in the sun, he looked for all the world like an enormous heron stalking over its eggs.

Everybody is in the saddle, the Kaïd in front arrayed in clean linen and a brand new blue burnoose. We pass by the few hillocks of ruddy sand, and all at once from the top of a last ridge, Fez, the old capital, the Mecca of the Occident, comes in sight, standing out against the peaks of the Atlas between the two high mountains on its sides. We descry a great grey line of crenellated ramparts broken with square towers, from the midst of which rise numberless terraces, mosques, minarets, and the fierce walls of the Sultan's palace. We proceed for some time along narrow intersecting paths, through fields of barley, and we are at the foot of the ramparts of the town.

The lofty walls when seen close by have an austere, menacing aspect with their dark embattlements towering into the sky. We pass under an immense decrepit ogee gateway eaten up at the base, and enter a large courtyard enclosed by gloomy walls, where we halt. The wall facing us, in which there is another gateway, rises to a prodigious height, pierced in its thickness with holes through which the sky is visible, spotted with yellow patches from which the coat of mortar has fallen. A few of the embrasures remain intact; all the others have disappeared, as well as a part of the crowning. On the left the square is barred by another enceinte of not so great a height, but in a better state of preservation. On the fourth side, on the right, they are building a wall, which is already four yards above the ground. It is being built in *tabia*. This mixture of sand and lime is run like concrete between two plank partitions propped in a vertical position by stakes fixed in the ground, joined in pairs through the masonry by cross pieces, which are drawn out when the mortar is solid enough. This explains the multitude of holes which you remark in all the buildings in Morocco.

About forty masons armed with wooden rammers are at work on the top of the wall, chanting in unison, and between each stanza they batter all at the same time the concrete, in order to ram it down. On catching sight of us they all turned round as one man, with a movement that looked very comical in its automatic simultaneity. They suddenly ceased their singing, stared at us with broad grins, and at a signal

given by their foreman swerved round once more in an amusing "volte face," with their backs towards us this time, taking up again their monotonous plaint, beating time with the thuds of their beetles as they ram the mortar in tune.



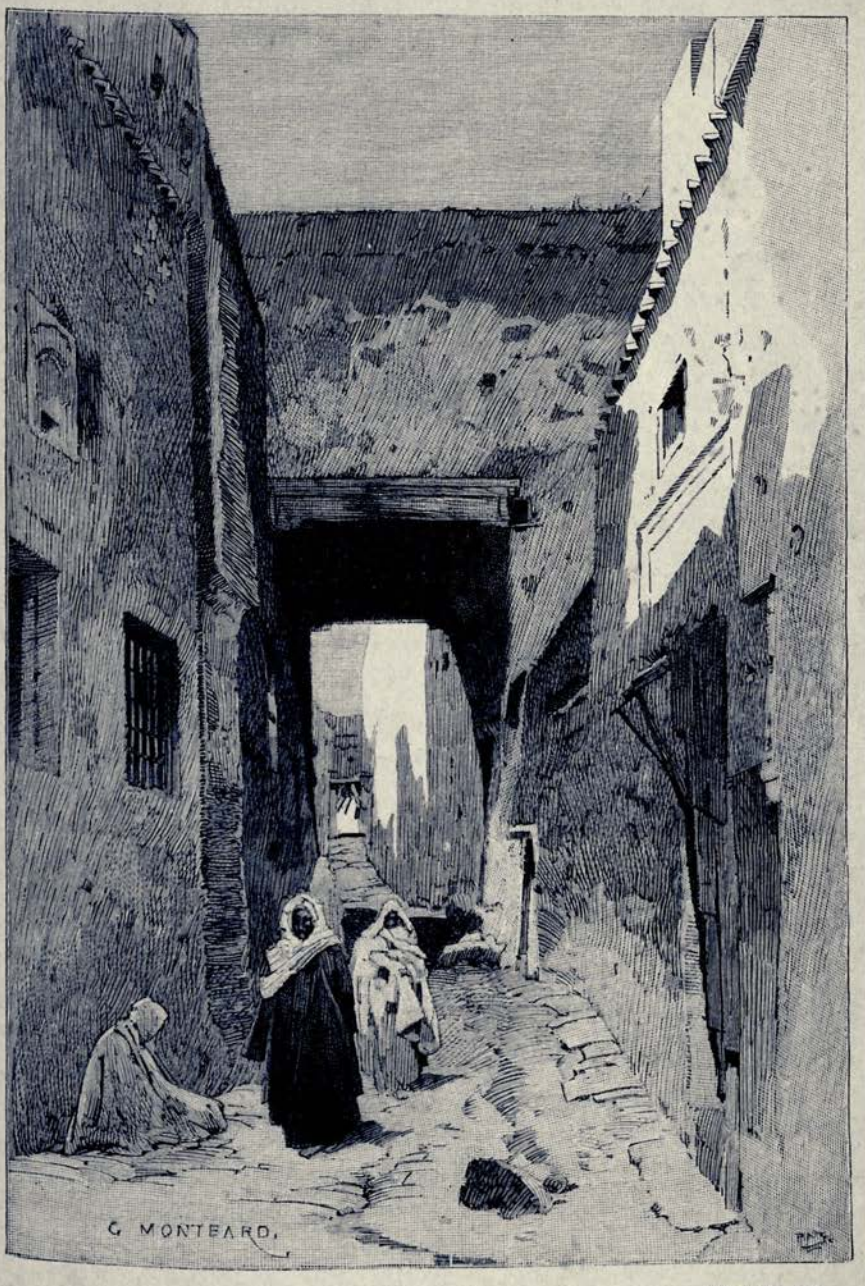
STREET IN FEZ.

Harris has gone to ask the Pasha for quarters for us and our men. While they are unloading the mules a crowd gathers round us, wind their way between us and our baggage, and we have great difficulty in getting rid of them. Dirty, tattered tents of black, yellow, and grey are pitched on every side. There are rickety stalls in which food is sold, kitchens in the open air where camel-drivers take their meals, water-carriers clash their brass goblets, negresses crouching in the sun sell flat cakes of bread, barbers are shaving their customers under open sheds propped by stakes, camels with shackles on their feet are bellowing terrifically, mules are rolling in the dust, frisky young donkeys are trotting, kicking about in every direction.

Through the midst of this motley throng resplendent horsemen clear a passage with their galloping steeds, soldiers are loitering, veiled women in white *haïks* move on, while knots of naked lads rush about like ferrets, yelling and shouting.

Harris has returned; he has got no accommodation from the Pasha as yet. While waiting for him to come to some decision we are going to make our way into the town.

The mules are loaded again, and passing through the second gateway we follow by the side of crenellated ramparts a quagmire of a road



STREET IN FEZ.

[*To face p.* 184.

obstructed by big blocks of stone broken up by the cavernous mouths of silos, gaping apertures of ruined vaults. Clearing one more ogee gateway, we reach the inner part of the town, Fez *Djedid*, the new Fez. Proceeding along narrow streets and others of greater width more frequented and lined by houses, shops, high decayed walls, we trot under arches, vaulted buildings, roofs of reed. Now and again we halt at a crossing under the shade of an old fig-tree with boughs outspread over the terraces of the houses, in order to let the caravans, the droves of oxen, and the files of laden camels pass by. Then we plunge under a ward's gateway with triple arches, beyond which there are no more shops. We descend a tolerably wide street with a steep slope between houses with bare fronts, crumbling walls supporting plank huttings, and we halt on a broad crossway.

Here Harris leaves us, taking Ingram with him, whom he wishes to introduce to Kaïd Maclean, an English officer in the Sultan's service, whose acquaintance he made last year. He lives in the neighbourhood, and Harris is going to take the opportunity to explain the state of our affairs to him, and ask his advice and assistance. Time is pressing, the Pasha doesn't seem in a hurry to find us lodgings, and we are running a great risk of sleeping in the open air.

For three hours we are kept cooling our heels, impatiently awaiting his return; but since, like Sister Anne, we can see no one coming, we send one of our muleteers on a reconnoitring expedition, and to remind Al Aïssoui that we are shivering in our saddles on a bleak crossway, exposed like a band of redskins to the curiosity of a malicious crowd.

It is well we took this step, for after a few minutes our messenger returns, and reports, what we had strongly suspected, that Harris had quite forgotten us.

After introducing Ingram to the Kaïd, he could not forego the pleasure of initiating the latter into the terrible vicissitudes of "my ride to Sheshouan." The Kaïd had, with his usual urbanity, listened with an attentive ear to the flowery periods, the learned digressions, the striking reflections of the poet-traveller, and Harris, encouraged by this tacit approbation, was going to continue with a "visit to Wazzan" when the unexpected arrival of our messenger had brusquely reminded him of his duties.

The Kaïd, profiting by the occasion, had leaped on to his horse, which was waiting ready saddled in the court, and had set off, accompanied by Harris, leaving Ingram lying on a sofa, where he had fallen sound asleep from the very commencement of "my ride to Sheshouan." Five minutes later the Kaïd was on the spot, shook hands with us, and invited us to take up our quarters under his roof.

We thankfully accept his kind offer, and follow his lead. We enter a narrow lane lined by garden walls in which our stirrups grate, for the path is so strait. Turning to the right and then to the left at a part of the road where the least slip would have plunged us with our beasts into a stream that drives a mill in front of us, whose ticking we can hear, we pass through a low door opened by an old negro, and we are in the Kaïd's garden, an orange-grove, where saddled horses are tethered and soldiers move to and fro. Our host introduces us to his brother, Captain Allen Maclean, and our kindly hostess, Mrs. Maclean, entertains us in the most charming manner.

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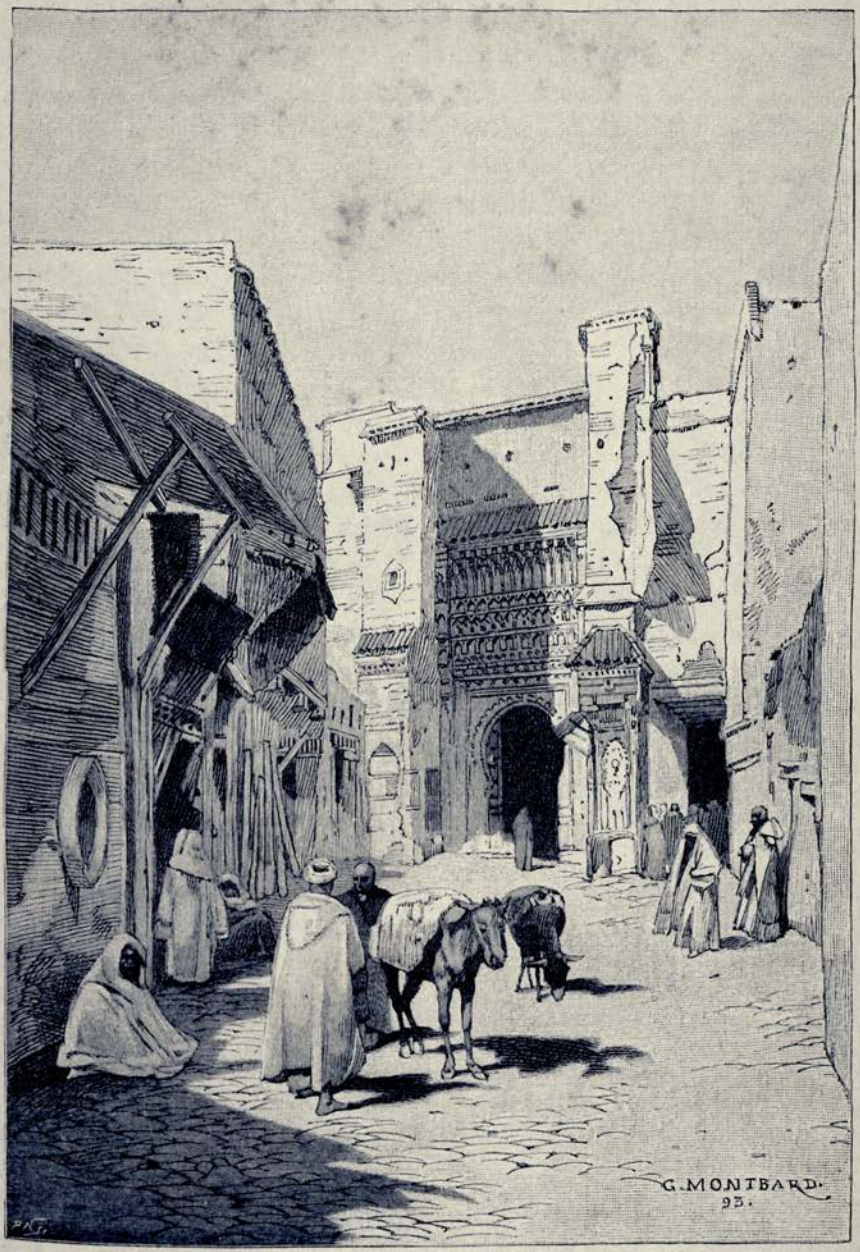
We are to stay at the house of Captain Maclean, who lives a short distance off, in a pavilion, in a delicious garden of orange and citron-trees, gaily decked with flowers and watered by fresh streams.

In a high, vast room with uncovered rafters, supported by a strong pillar in the centre, and lighted by a large grated window, our camp-beds, which are put up, and our baggage piled on the floor, fill up the captain's elegant dwelling. A narrow staircase in a corner of the building leads to the ground floor and the terrace. Just before you get to the landing there's a recess, occupied by Ahmed, a fine young Moor, our host's servant.

From the terrace we got a view of the town rising amid a belt of valleys in an infinite number of white terraces, from the middle of which surge the square towers of the minarets, the menacing enceintes of the ramparts, the tall yellow walls of the Sultan's palace. Down below a portico stands in front of the pavilion, and its triple ogee arcade is supported by pretty octagonal columns with a coating of limewash.

In front of this façade a fountain pours its clear water into a broad deep square reservoir formed level with the ground and lined with mosaics. Its overflowing waters escape in rills between the flowers,



DOOR OF A FONDAK IN FEZ.

[*To face p.* 186.

the plants, the clusters of orange and lemon-trees. Their boughs laden with fruit form a verdant dome above the reservoir, and their leafy fringes graze the walls of the house and penetrate right through the window grating into our room.

The sun shines through interstices of the thick leafy vault on the ground in an endless number of luminous flickering spots; warbling birds wing their flight; the wind rustles over the top of the trees. Now and again an orange falls into the reservoir with a splash, making the water leap up in diamond sheaves.

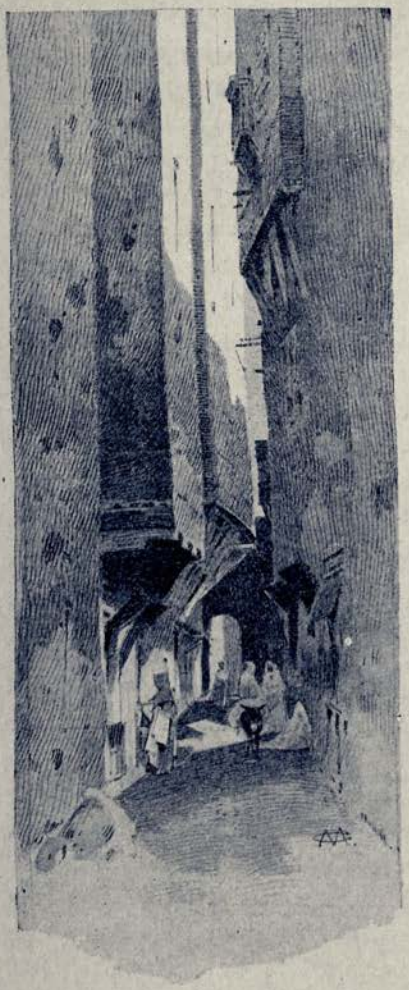
Mosses, lichens, saxifrages cover the rugous summits of the old walls surrounding the garden. Honeysuckles, convolvuluses, bindweeds hide the crevices, creep over the crumbling masonry, crawling through the shrubs. A quantity of plants, gorged with sap, grow in an extravagant profusion and luxuriate in every nook and corner of the dilapidated parts, and a fresh delicious odour perfumes the air.

This morning, at breakfast, Harris related to us a stormy interview that he has just had with the Pasha. This gentleman, last evening, on the presentation of the letters from Si-Torrès, had at once promised to find us lodgings. When the evening had drawn in, and the Pasha had not kept his word, Harris had returned to the charge and insisted that some house or other should be put at our disposal before the nightfall. They had soothed him with deceitful promises, and while we were at the house of Kaïd Maclean, our men had received an order to go and encamp on a waste piece of ground between Old and New Fez, and there they had spent the night.

That was a serious want of respect, to which our fiery comrade could not by any means tamely submit, and it had actually spoiled his first night in Fez. So as soon as he had got out of bed he had set off to the Pasha, whom he found dispensing justice, surrounded by soldiers and officials. Without paying the least heed to his presence, the Pasha had with the most tranquil indifference continued to call and to try the various cases before him.

Harris's patience was utterly exhausted by this complete disregard of the courtesy due to him, this insolent unconcern. He had leaped into the hall with flashing eye and provoking mien, and then with a

thrilling voice called upon the functionary to keep his promise forthwith. The latter, incensed at being thus treated in his own sanctum, had flatly declined to do anything.



STREET IN FEZ.

At the last affront Al Aïssoui had sent orders to his soldiers—for so in his noble wrath he termed our muleteers — to strike the camp, enter the town, and to go and pitch the tents full in front of the Sultan's windows. Then turning with a defiant air towards the Pasha, he had threatened him that he would let off guns the whole night long until the Sultan himself—he laid strong emphasis on "himself" —should come and inquire the reason of this unwonted discharge of musketry, and then he would let him know how shamefully he had been treated by his subordinate.

In order to get rid of Harris, the Pasha had then sent one of his soldiers to find some house or other; but the wily rascal, following no doubt the directions of his chief, who wanted to revenge himself on Harris for his aggressive importunity, and to have a laugh at him, had taken him to a dirty, filthy cowshed.

This supreme insult had driven Al Aïssoui beside himself. He returned to the court, poured out a torrent of abuse, made the ears of the Pasha tingle with a shower of epithets opprobrious to the last degree; but the facetious representative

of the Sultan, who all the while had been making merry at the expense of our irascible friend, finally put an end to this unseemly joke by letting for an exorbitant sum a middling sort of house where Harris could lodge his "soldiers" and stow our baggage.

* * * *

Marshall is very weak, he can scarcely stand on his legs. The Macleans have put up a bed for him in their own house, sent for Dr. Linarès of the French mission, a friend of the family, and they leave nothing undone for him. Let us hope that he will be a trifle more careful in the future, and will take heed of our warnings.

STREET IN FEZ.

We set off to the town, accompanied by Selim and our Kaïd. Everything is quite as old, as decayed, as decrepit as at Mequinez, but there is more life, more bustle. The buildings are higher, the crowd is more lively, more noisy, but the houses, mosques, palaces, fortifications are mingled and interwoven in the same inextricable fashion, the same odd complexity of architecture. Series of arches one above the other are erected at great heights across the streets, buildings are thrown like bridges at different storeys from one house to the other. On their façades are grafted little canted bays with domes, supported by carved corbels of cedar-wood; storeys project on offset beams artistically carved, and between the

tops of the houses, which almost touch one another, you perceive a strip of sky.

One feels oppressed between these high, gloomy, bare walls, pierced, at long intervals, by a narrow loophole, a grated window, a low entrance, now and again, where through a door barded with rows of nails, which half opens and is shut at once without noise, a white shadow disappears.

We pass under long vaulted tunnels oozing with moisture and stained by mouldiness; passages with carved rafter ceilings. Here and there lovely fountains spread over the tottering walls their rich mantles of mosaics, the marvellous interlacings of their arabesques and their delicate traceries.

Through wretched ogee doorways we get glimpses of courtyards surrounded by arcades and filled with folk, cattle, and steeds. These place are caravansaries, where entertainment is afforded to man and beast.

At every moment you pass under double and triple ranges of elegantly decorated arches, with indented ogees. There are wide holes in the paved street, and you hear the sound of rippling streams.

In some of these streets it is difficult to move about, the crush is so great, and ever and anon in front of you, behind you, beside you, always and everywhere, you hear the continuous yelping, the execrable, menacing cry of *baleuk!*

Galloping soldiers pass by on horseback, and before we have time to squeeze ourselves against a wall for fear of being run over, there comes the yell *baleuk!*

Camels laden with planks, piles of wool, sacks of barley, come stalking along, obstructing the whole street, thumping their heavy loads against the walls and jostling the people in front of them—*baleuk!*

A drove of oxen driven by fierce herdsmen blocks up the way, and ere we can take refuge under the arch of a gateway or any other nook at hand, in order to let the menacing tide flow away—*baleuk!*

An important functionary, an *amin*, attended by servants, is riding along on his mule, his finely-shaped head set off by the folds of his muslin *haïk*—*baleuk!*

Then comes a magnificent negro horseman, one of the Sultan's guards,

a *bokhari* in white *sulham*, clad in the folds of his silk *haïk*, mounted on a black horse—*Baleuk!* And still for ever *baleuk!* still in the towns in the villages, along the routes—everywhere, hum in your ears, buzz in the crowd, the eternal *baleuk!* the incessant, the inevitable watch-cry of the Moghreb.

We quit these noisy streets and roam through gloomy labyrinths of lanes, passages, blind alleys, where awful silence reigns, where carcases are rotting. We stumble over big, lean, mangy cats with bristling backs, climb heaps of refuse, piles of rubbish; we skirt yawning holes, at the bottom of which the waters of underground canals run with a dull noise, gleaming with a cold lustre.

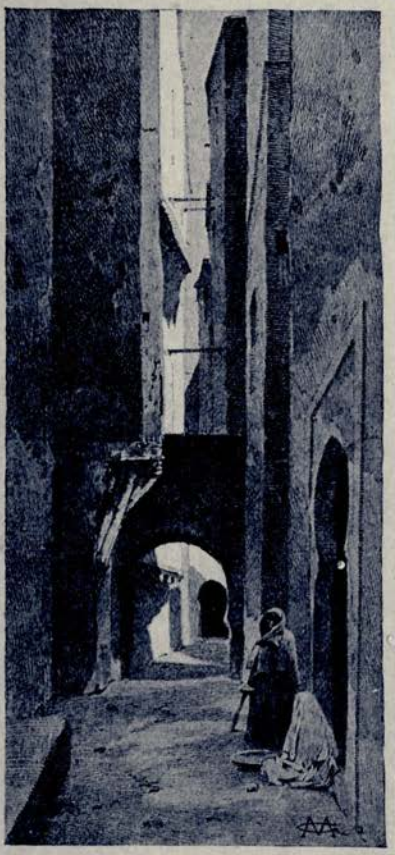
STREET IN FEZ.

Then we suddenly emerge on open spaces, orchards, gardens, lanes lined by low walls, cracked by the sun, covered by yellow lichen, saxifrage, slender plants, bushes, above which fig-trees spread their twisted branches; orange-trees laden with fruit form a bower over our heads, and the breeze warmed by the sun sweeps by with fragrant odours.

On every side you hear the trickling of water, the rolling of millwheels. You constantly come across streams of water rushing from mossy walls and disappearing with a hollow murmur under vaults.

Donkeys laden with sacks of corn and flour pass by, driven by

white-powdered lads, and you efface yourselves along the walls to make room for them. And everywhere, in the middle of these ruins, of this absolute decrepitude, one remarks, even in the least details of architecture, an acuteness of observation, a search of elegance, a refinement of taste surprising. On the worm-eaten doors of empty houses are suspended, half torn away from their fastenings, marvellous knockers of wonderful shape, and chiselled with exquisite taste and amazing sureness of hand. Horseshoe arches with curves of admirable purity are adorned with delicious laces of arabesques, of mosaics, composed with a rare felicity both in design and colour. Angles of walls are chamfered with curves and broken lines that are charming in their unexpected effect. On the fronts of the houses, decorations in high relief on the stucco produce plays of light and shade that delight the eyes by breaking the wearisome monotony of the great bare walls.



STREET IN FEZ.

Sometimes in order to embellish a simple opening, an unpretentious window, treasures of art and patience have been spent on the elaboration of a series of arches, small columns, ogees, interlacings, ornamental designs, combinations of curves and straight lines, that unite in producing an architectural jewel of an adorable fancy.

* * * * * *

To-day we are going to visit the bazaars. The zigzag paths lined by old walls near those of the Kaïd's, bring us into a rather broad, long street that slopes sharply down to the shops.

The top of the street is barred by a great crenellated ogee gateway, very dilapidated, and propped by beams. A little way lower down another ogee gateway opens in a grim embattled wall, flanked by octagonal towers; a triple row of arabesques encircles the cinter, and the upper part of the façade is covered with interlaced carvings and mosaics of a nice design and remarkable harmony in tone. Almost all the embrasures are broken, big holes disfigure the handsome façade, the base of the walls is eaten up, and the cants of the towers are completely worn away.

There is a great bustle of soldiers coming and going, and under the deep vault we see some sitting and others lying on the ground.

Lower down, in a re-entering angle, a very fine door attracts our attention. The double wooden panels are covered with brass ornaments artistically designed. A succession of corbelled beams, carved with precious skill, painted over in colours relieved with gold, support a roof of green tiles, where mosses, grass, and shrubs grow at will.

Farther off stands the tower of a ruined mosque. On its summit storks have built their nests, and its base is hidden by a number of wretched shops.

Near by, raw-boned beggars are huddled in sombre recesses. Bald, toothless, horrid old hags are carrying heavy loads, and heap abuse on us as they go by.

We pass under vaults, arches; we advance by the side of glabrous walls of gloomy buildings, and then, still descending, we disappear under an obscure, moist passage, and emerge on a sort of irregular open square, a pretty broad crossway.

On one side of the place, in a gigantic wall, opens between two narrow bastions a monumental gateway. The immense ogee is encircled by festoons of arabesques, and a triple fillet in relief forms a rectangular frame round these ornaments. Above the horizontal fillet lies a long band of mosaics in tiles of indistinct colour, on which stand out in black letters verses from the Koran. Immediately over this are infinite rows of small indented arches with pendants resting on tiny columns, rising one above the other in a succession of alveolate corbels. Figured dentils, delicate pilasters, and interminable interlacings, deftly combined, are entwined in the intervals between the ogees, which seem

as though they were sculptured on a large stone lacework. Over all that, and strongly projecting, dominates a powerful crowning covered with a roof of green tiles, and supported by receding consoles, one on top of the other, carved with ogees, wreaths of arabesques, in an extraordinary profusion. Above all this, still higher, runs up the smooth high wall, its summit covered with a roof of tiles.

The whole structure forms a dull grey, dusty mass, worn by the centuries, but still retaining a mournful and grandiose splendour. Birds have built their nests in the covings of the ogees, spiders have woven their webs between the cornices of the consoles, parasite plants have taken root in angles, and great black "striæ" tarnish the interlacings; hard layers of coagulated dust impaste the listels of the flutings, the fine arrises of the curves, the delicate chasings of the fillets, and the antique monument, battered by the rain, cracked by the sun, is falling into dust, dispersed by the winds.

The bastion, on the right, which advances a long way out, between the noble gateway and the dark hole through which we came on the place, is adorned by a lovely fountain, whose waters flow in two jets from a cintered mosaic inlaid in the wall, and fall into a big marble basin. Over the arch lies a band of carved interlacings, surmounted by a frieze formed by beams set over one another, and with ornamented angles, and higher up a roof of tiles rests on an alignment of sculptured and painted consoles; the ensemble is in a frightful state of decrepitude and decay. On the front of the other bastion there is a sham window with its pointed arch blocked up.

This colossal gateway is the entrance to a *fondak*. The courtyard is surrounded by porticoes with octagonal columns, whose bases are covered with wooden casings. The plane surfaces of the capitals, whose corbel tables form the arcade, are worked with lovely arabesques, and the arrises of narrow ogees, alternating with the wide openings of the porticoes, are indented with fine mouldings. Above these rise two tiers of galleries with balconies decorated with *moucharabiehs*, fitted with benches. At the back of these galleries are rooms where Jews store their wares. The porticoes on the ground floor are closed by carved doors surmounted by iron gratings.

INTERIOR OF A FONDAK IN FEZ.

[*To face p.* 194.

Here, too, everything is crumbling, corroding, decaying; the plaster is falling from the masonry, the *moucharabiehs* are rotting, the sculptured panels are worm-eaten, and the festooned ogees are slowly disaggregating —it is a general ruin. A *kaouadji* is installed under the archway; in the courtyard, bales and boxes are piled up, camels and mules are being unloaded.

Outside the *fondak*, on the right, under the shade of an old vine, climbing along the creviced walls, over a rotten dislocated trellis, camel-drivers are sleeping near crouching beasts, donkeys are lying down, beggars are taking their siesta. High walls with a few doorways line the square to the right of the fountain; on the left are grocers' shops, and in low, ramshackle huts, harness-makers.

We are in the midst of the bazaars: first a long steep street, quite crowded with people and animals, lined with shops; and in the framing of thousands of articles hanging outside, calm and reserved dealers are squatting in their small square holes.

The air is impregnated with aromatic scents. You inhale the odours of incense and *kif*, mingled with the vague stench of sweat and excrement of beasts, and when rolls on the hollow flood of these people, whose bare or slippered feet tread noiselessly on the ground, the clacking of our heels re-echoes strangely on the worn, shiny, small, round paving-stones.

The shops are of various kinds here. There are saddle-makers, silk-mercers, leather-sellers, grocers, tobacconists. They sell tea, coffee, scarlet *fez*, hides, yellow morocco leather; low tables with marble mosaic tops, carved and painted legs; cedar stands of vivid colours set off by a few gold fittings, manufactured at Tetouan. By the side of stalls filled with German looking-glasses, French hardware, Manchester cottons, Venice jets, Italian coral, Russian samovars, are displayed the products of the Soudan, gums from Senegal, ostrich feathers amulets of cloth, black stone, which protect against the bites of reptiles. You brush by grim-faced mountaineers, under their ample brown *djellabiehs*, speckled with gay tufts of silk, their heads encircled by the red cases of their muskets, which they carry on their shoulders. There are fair-haired Berbers in white *haïks* of coarse wool, illuminati

with deep sunken eyes, bloated saints entirely naked, droning verses from the Koran, beggars with repulsive sores, handsome horsemen, Pashas mounted on fine mules brilliantly harnessed, crafty Jews stealthily gliding, and veiled women making purchases.

At times you hear the harrowing notes of the *ghaïtas*, the bagpipes of the Arabs, with such sad strains, the sound of flutes, and a rapid succession of gunshots. Then you are forced back against the shops by armed bands which come rushing and yelling through the retreating crowd, leaping like wild animals, and firing off their guns right and left. It is the *lab-el-baroud*, the "game of gunpowder," a fantasia in celebration of a wedding or circumcision.

We are in front of the Karaouïn mosque, the holy mosque "par excellence." We pass by slowly. Through the open massive folding doors you foresee interminable ranges of columns, infinite successions of arcades losing themselves into the sombre distance in a mysterious penumbra. Thousands of lanterns are suspended from the vaults of the sanctuary, and on the floor a crowd is prostrated, the foreheads touching the dust, and in the fever of a wild religious exaltation implore panting the mercy of the Most High.

The immense murmur of these voices, united in solemn and formidable prayer to invoke the name of Allah, rolls with dim roar under the innumerable vaults, breaks out, and rises into the air above with hollow resoundings, strange and terrible outbursts.

We stroll round the mosque along high, dull chap walls with dingy summits entwined with the neighbouring houses. Through other doors of the mosque you perceive marble *mirhabs* with elegant small columns, antique pulpits of cedar-wood adorned with marvellous reliefs, and inlaid with ivory and ebony. By the side of massive pillars with heavy cinters run lines of slender columns connected by delicate curves scalloped like old lace, façades of porticoes of dazzling whiteness. You see gleaming with faint tints, pieces of sculpture set off by tarnished gildings of faded pallid colours, under a shroud of dust, which has accumulated for centuries. Between the embrasures of the minarets storks have made their nests, and are quietly resting on one leg.

From walls faced with mosaics glittering in the sun with sparkling

reflects, fresh water of fountains flows and falls into marble basins with the sheen of liquid gold. And still resounds, like the rumbling of a distant thunder, the imposing clamour, the religious hymn of prostrate believers.

We have come back to the bazaars again, the part where saddlery and pottery are sold—a wide passage with low shops. A subdued light comes through a lattice roof formed by reeds thrown over cross-beams that rest on the top of the shop walls. Vines centuries old have grown in angles, and stretch their branches over warped, dislocated trellises, and soften the fierce brightness of the sun.

Arabs are quenching their thirst at a mural fountain. From some shop-fronts hang velvet harness, red, crimson, light blue, pale green, mignonette green, deep amaranth, jonquil, set with stones; saddles with high cantles and pointed pommels entirely covered with gold embroidered velvet; stirrups encrusted with gold or silver; curb-chains, bridle-bits, spurs carefully chased, reins embroidered with gold and silk.

Then there are ranges of pottery, of lovely form, design, colours, speckled with purple spots, looking like drops of blood; urns with a pure contour of a rare elegance, with double or triple ears; vases modelled like the ancient canopes of Memphis, embellished by bands, by scrolls of foliage, flowers, dentils of various colours; dishes, basins largely splayed at the base, some of them fluted, strewn inside with roses, stars and ogees, with palms and nosegays interlaced with lines cleverly ordered. All these things are covered with an enamel of light rosy colour, and enhanced by polychrome decorations, in which crude green, citrine yellow, warm brown, azure blue shades dominate with a most lovely harmony.

From there we proceed to the arms bazaar—a steep narrow street, where beam heaps of weapons. Rafters supporting rotten planks indicate that at one time the bazaar was covered in. Vines have taken root in the corners, wind along the walls, scaling arches, creeping into the crevices. Here the dealers are less polished, less mindful of their attire and their persons than those in the other bazaars. Many of them are of Berber or Kabyle origin. Their brusque ways, loud voices,

and fits of vulgar unprovoked laughter, strangely set forth the cold gravity, the distinguished and courteous manners of their "confrères" of the other bazaars. They soon grow provokingly familiar, forcing their wares on us, and holding us back in order to induce us to conclude a bargain.

THE ARMS BAZAAR IN FEZ.

The shops are crammed with weapons, especially swords, sabres, daggers of every shape, of every epoch, of every country. Sabres with hilts of rhinoceros horn and iron guards, their blades graven in letters of gold, with the mottoes of noble Andalusian families; curved *khangiars* in chiselled brass sheaths; scimitars whose blades are stamped with Solomon's seal, their steel guards inlaid with gold, and their pommels set with rubies and emeralds; Kabyle *flissas* with narrow curved blades and guilloched copper hilts; pistols with damask barrels and butts artistically carved, set with stones; old Spanish blunderbusses, the relics of some brigands; slender flexible straight swords, with large basket hilts in open-work, whose supple blades bend till the point touches the guard, and whose steel, when with a brusque movement it grows straight again, cuts the air, whizzing and vibrating long afterwards. You find there "adargues," these curious pointed shields dating from the fifteenth century; siege forks, triple-pronged, and hook-shaped; war flails; damaskeened axes; Saracen armour; guns from the Sous, with

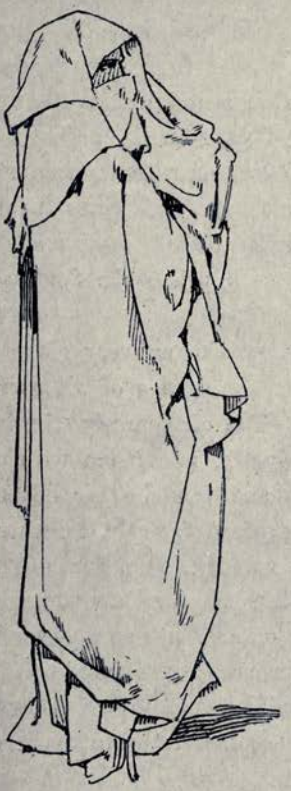
thin ivory butts inlaid with silver, and set with rubies, topazes, amethysts, their barrels chased with gold, and mounted with silver rings, worked in "repoussé."

Among these weapons you perceive shields of hippopotamus hide; lances with shafts of iron-wood, javelines whose heads are fastened to the handle by animals' gut; bows, quivers of human skin, filled with barbed and poisoned arrows; knives with broad, bent blades, and roughly adjusted to wooden cudgels; big sabres from the Soudan, with broad straight blades, their hilts wound with red leather thongs, and their sheaths of yellow skin ornamented with shells, and which are slung over the left shoulder. Next are lots of rude and sinister instruments of death and torture: heavy chains and rings to be fastened to the wrists and ankles; iron balls bristling with sharp spikes, and provided with a pointed prong, with which the fanatical *santons* pierce through their own cheeks.

We are now in the babouche bazaar, a very narrow, very gloomy passage flagged with stones, where hides, boots, shoes, bags of all sorts and colours are piled up in obscure recesses. The air scarcely stirs in this dimly lighted alley, the atmosphere is heavy, and laden with a strong smell of leather. Magnificent yellow and blue leather boots, *temmags* embroidered in silk and gold, are exposed for sale, together with delicious ladies' slippers in various colours, blue, turquoise, yellow, salmon, and sea-green, adorned with silk, which appear through the delicately cut leather. A little farther off are bags with several pockets; satchels worked in silk; cartridge pouches with coloured tufts; and leather Koran cases embroidered in silk and gold. Veiled women in *haïks*, are sitting on the ledges trying on boots, and the merchants are gallantly attentive to their pretty customers.

We now come to the clothes bazaar, a covered place too, but somewhat less narrow and less sombre. Cloth and silk *eaftans* in purple, orange, scarlet, and mauve colours, are fastened to the front of the shops, together with fabrics woven with gold, spangled with silver, silk cords, blue, mauve, green, violet, red, lemon, for strapping up bags, *khangiärs*, satchels, and the fine ornamented cases for the Koran. They show us remarkable embroideries, broad gilt women's belts, as stiff

as cardboard. They spread before us superb tapestry, *haïties* of silk and velvet resplendent with gold embroidery. Calm, serious-looking, polite shop-keepers, seated at the bottom of their dark recesses amid piles of fabrics, offer us cups of amber and mint-scented tea, and put outrageous prices on their goods, which they finally part with for a reasonable sum. Cheap jacks, laden with articles of every kind, roam about, shouting the prices of their wares put up for auction.



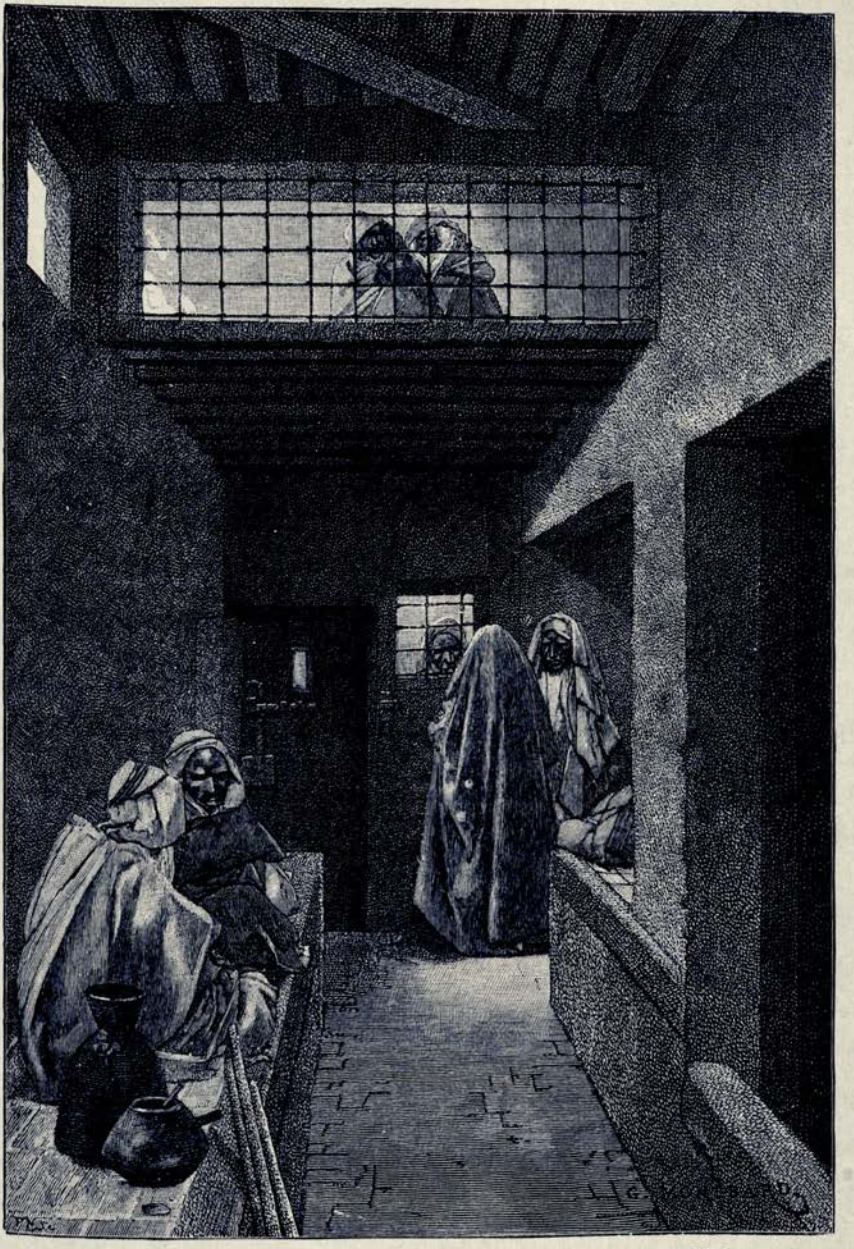
A LADY OF FEZ AT THE PROMENADE.

In a little courtyard adjoining the bazaar there's an old enormous fig-tree entwined by a vine; some poor town and country women squatting under the shade of the old tree are offering at a low price, to poorer customers, second-hand clothes, out of use jewels, worn-out frippery; Jews in a few open stalls are selling bracelets, necklaces, ribbons, flasks of rose-water, laces, *koheul*, antimony, and *souak*, the pounded bark of walnut-trees, which the Moors chew for hardening the gums.

Farther on are sold Tafilet products: dates, ostrich eggs, Tlemcen wares, olive and argan oil from Sous.

We are now in the carpet bazaar, a square courtyard roofed in lattice-work, surrounded by shops, above which is a boarding with ogee and star-shaped apertures symmetrically placed. This upper timber construction projects far in front of the shops, supported by wooden corbels. In one of the corners there's a running fountain. They expose to us carpets from Rabat and Mogador, traversed by yellow, orange, and violet ornamented bands, woollen blankets with red stripes and blue tufts, prayer carpets brought from Syria, of soft and delightful shades.

Here is the dyers' street. In large underground cribs men with



[*To face p.* 200.

A PRISON IN FEZ.

naked bust, their arms stained with colour, are soaking stuffs in tubs containing purple, yellow, and indigo dyes.

We then reach the armourers' quarter, where they manufacture in thousands those guns of unvarying shape with splayed butts plated with copper sheet and nails, and long barrels mounted with silver rings, the weapons preferred above all others by the Arab horsemen.

Near by is the coppersmiths' bazaar, in which there is a ceaseless hammering of the metal, which is wrought into trays, tables, vases, censers in open-work, and cylindrical lamps carved in arabesques.

* * * *

To-day we have paid a visit to the prison. We traversed two or three obscure passages and entered a sombre yard taking its light from a narrow grating. On presenting a written order from the Pasha, the warder showed us into the cells on the ground floor, where the ragged prisoners, some of them in fetters, appear to bear their sad fate with philosophic calm. They live on donations, and what their families and friends bring them. Those who have no one to take an interest in them die of starvation, or nearly so, unless they devote themselves to manufacturing trifles of rushwork, such as mats, *koufas*, and baskets, the sale of which brings them in a few coppers to buy a little food.

A PRISONER.

The upper story is of frightful aspect. Under damp vaults lit by one pale gleam of light filtering through a hole, prisoners in rags, infested with vermin, are chained to massive square pillars. Iron collars are fastened round their necks, and rings riveted round their ankles, and when these phantoms with livid flesh, emaciated features, make a movement, their heavy chains clank with a sinister sound.

In the ground among the filth, exsanguinous bodies, lean as skeletons, are stretched. They lay as rigid as corpses, and foul, hairy black rats career over their bare limbs.

Occasionally a wailing cry, a shrill, piercing prolonged shriek is heard, and one of the doomed beings, suddenly losing his senses, rattles furiously his chain, dashes about, and falls back strangled by the horrible iron collar, his ankles lacerated by the rings that bind him to his Calvary.

When one of the unfortunate creatures succumbs, a rope is tied round his feet, his body, half devoured by rats, is dragged out and carried away on a stretcher.

The gaoler has just led us to a corner of the dungeon from which constantly escapes a hollow convulsive moan, full of indescribable anguish. It is with some difficulty that we distinguish at first in the shadow a grey, shrivelled, curled-up mass, squatting in a pestilent cloaca. On coming nearer we perceive a human being chained to the wall, and the gaoler informs us that he is a robber who is enduring the "salt-torture," and that he will be dead before night, killed by the appalling sufferings.

With outstretched arms, hugely open eyes, dilated pupils, tightly clenched teeth, haggard features stiffened in a supreme convulsion, the poor wretch was writhing in agony. We pause for a moment, spellbound with horror at the expression of frightful grief imprinted on the contracted face of this miserable being, with the death-rattle in his throat, dying with the terrible torture.

This punishment, which is sometimes inflicted on criminals, is atrocious. It is done in this way. An incision is made in the palms of the hands, the wounds are filled with salt, each hand is then clenched with the nails dug into the sores, and is kept in this condition by a bandage of fresh hide wound tightly round it. At the end of a certain time the bandage is taken off, the hand is anchylosed and won't open, but the nails continue to grow, penetrating into the flesh, and inflicting such awful agony that the victim soon dies or becomes mad.

Another variety of torture consists in scorching the eyes with a red hot iron, and very frequently these miserable creatures with bleeding orbs are to be met with at the corners of streets and on the crossways, imploring alms of the passers-by.

In comparison with these modes it seems almost a trifle to cut off a thief's hand or to bastinade a poor devil.

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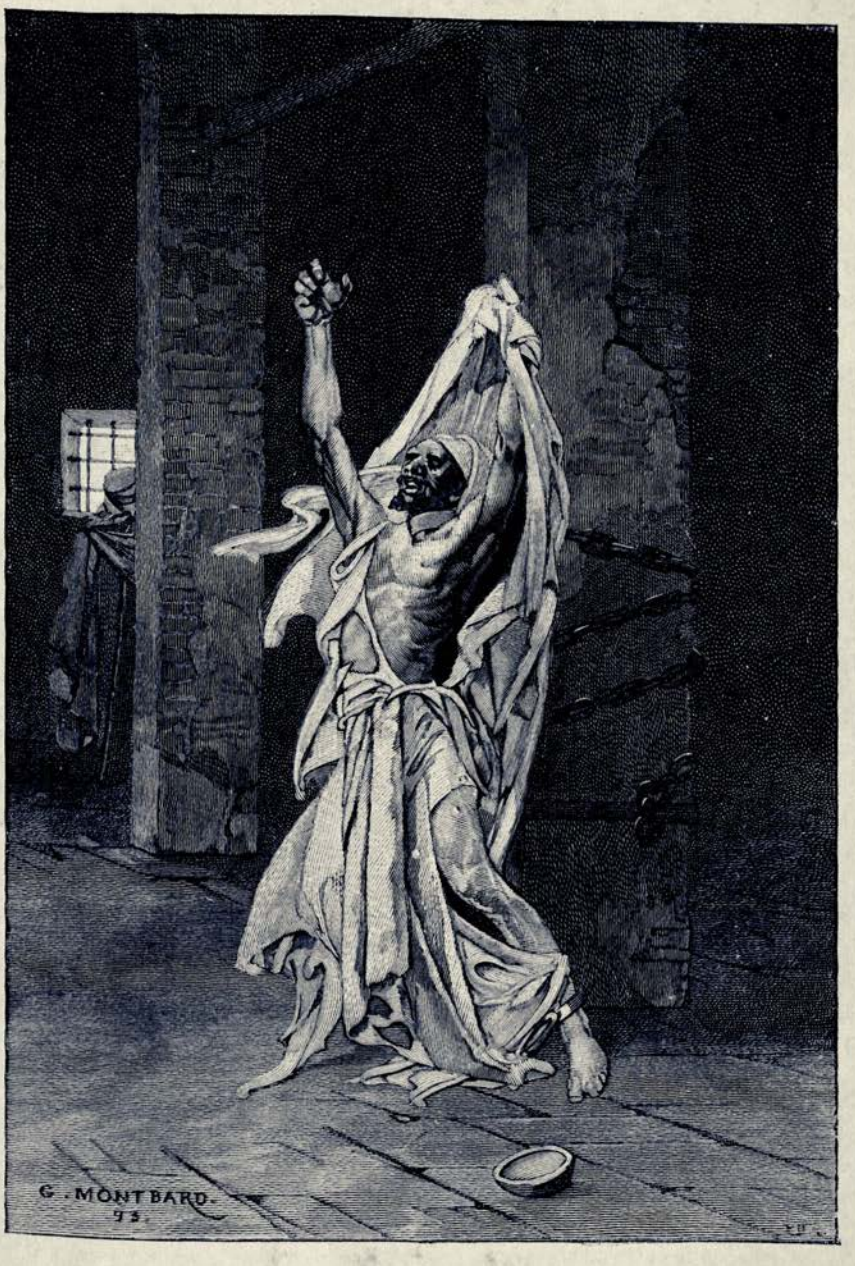

A MADMAN IN A PRISON IN FEZ. [*To face p.* 202.

From the terrace on the top of the house where our men are lodged the aspect of the town is quite fairylike. It is, first of all, a succession of white platforms, an agglomeration of terraces rising in tiers, interpenetrating each other, stretching endlessly, blended into the far bluish distance. From the midst of this wide expanse surge the tall towers of mosques, the high crenellated wall of the *Kasbah*, the formidable enceintes of the town, and the sombre walls of the Sultan's palace buried in masses of verdure. Then it is an immense circle of mountains with sharp peaks and steep slopes, at the foot of which you descry remains of ruined walls and *khoubas*, domes, cupolas of tombs like white specks, and farther off, far away in the south, the Atlas with its snow.

AT HOME ON THE TERRACE.

The terraces are crowded with women, some reclining on carpets, others promenading in groups, a few sitting with dangling feet on the ledges of the walls, chatting with their neighbours on the opposite side of the street. They pass in endless succession from house to house, from terrace to terrace; they throw flying bridges from one side of the street to the other; they escalade roofs and climb with a cat-like agility short ladders placed against low walls. And in this amusing gymnastic sudden gusts of wind, indiscreet freaks of dress, disclose now and again a fine bosom, a pretty arched foot, a marvellously shaped leg, and occasionally something more.

Women are preparing meals on little earthenware ovens, others are washing, spreading out the linen on lines, taking it down, folding it, and occupying themselves with the thousand-and-one duties of the household.

Nothing is more interesting, more curiously original, than the sight of these roofs swarming with people, this feminine life manifesting itself without constraint on this multitude of terraces, exuberant with spirit, mirth, animation.

Most of the women are handsome, with a proud, savage, attractive beauty. Their attitudes are marked with a strange suppleness mixed

THE TERRACES OF THE HOUSES IN FEZ.

with a surprising abruptness; and in the feline movements of their pose, astonishingly graceful, unconsciously provocating, there is a suggestion of a voluptuous fatigue.

Some of them, their foreheads entwined with sequins, their eyes enlarged by antimony, their eyelashes and eyebrows darkened, their brows tattooed with blue, stand erect, motionless with folded arms, fixed eyes, the look lost in the space. Their heads are covered with the

glistening *hantouze*, whose ribbons spangled with gold fall on each side of their breasts like the bandlets of an Egyptian god, and light gold-embroidered veils float over their shoulders. A wide and stiff belt of gold and silk secures at the waist their *kaftan*, which, underneath a surplice of transparent gauze, falls down to the knees. And the *kaftan's* upper edge, braided with gold, opened on the breast, reveals the hem of their linen chemise, whose snowy whiteness strongly contrasts with their dark skin plated with necklaces and jewels. Their wide sleeves turned up to the shoulders with silken cords expose their fine naked arms, clasped by antique shape bracelets, and silver rings tinkle on their delicate ankles. One would think to see them thus rigid in their straight pose, magnificently attired, they were mysterious idols who had been exposed out of their venerated temples.

A MARRIED WOMAN WITH THE "HANTOUZE."

Slim young girls with big dark eyes, and a simple silk kerchief attached round their heads, move about with an adder-like flexibility, and their long loosened tresses flow over their shoulders.

Slaves, negresses with hard profiles and sombre faces, with heavy metal rings in their ears, clad in checked garments of red or blue squares on a white ground, their waists encircled by red belts, are standing hard by.

The women walk with arms entwined along the terraces, with a voluptuous sway of the hips, lean on the old whitened walls, lengthen themselves lasciviously over the calcinated roofs, and the friendly chats begin: delicate disclosures are made in a low voice, secrets of the harem are whispered into the ear, many peals of laughter burst in pearled notes, mingled with the harsh titter of the negresses;

and the echoes of these youthful voices, of these gay pranks, of this amusing life in the open air, rise from the innumerable terraces in a long and melodious murmur.

And the lovely creatures in the halo of their golden head-dress, in the splendour of their superb poses, breathe the evening air, and when the balmy breezes laden with the overpowering odours of benzoin and aloes, mixed with the puissant fragrance of far-off plains, pass between their moist lips, kiss their nacred teeth, envelop with a caress their bare, shapely limbs, their nostrils slightly quiver, their bosoms swell a little more, gleams flash in the shadow of their deep eyes, and their unsatiated flesh, shaken with inexplicable tremor, thrills, bitten by some mysterious desire.

AN INCIDENT OF THE HAREM.

And the sun slowly setting in the immense canopy bathes with its golden hues the old terrace walls, which take amber tints. The gilded mitres of the *hantouzes* glisten, the bandlets, the veils spangled, interwoven with gold, scintillate, the necklaces glimmer, ruddy reflects glide on the proud dark heads, on the bare lovely arms, encircled by bracelets; the negresses, with inflexible profiles, are resplendent like bronze statues, and warm tints run on the loose tresses of the lithe-limbed maidens.

The fiery orb disappeared behind the highest peak of the mountains,

fringing its broken summits with a purple thread, and a great blue shadow falls on the terraces, softening its glaring tones; one last flame illumes the height of the lofty ramparts, envelops the highest points of the minaret towers; their gilded balls sparkle, and the old worn-out mosaics shine in softened glares. The dying gleams colour with a rosy sheen the green tiles on the roofs of the mosques, and in the pale yellow sky, speckled with light purple clouds, birds in triangular array pass flying to the south, and storks soar aloft on the wing.

Then in a great and imposing silence that has suddenly fallen, shrill plaintive droning voices are heard, and the solemn prayer is done, bowing the front in the dust, all the world of Islam.

* * * *

We often see Dr. Linarès, and the more we see of him the more we wish to see him. He has set Marshall on his legs, and our friend is completing his convalescence by strolling idly through the bazaars.

A WOMAN OF FEZ.

This morning the doctor invited Forestier and myself to lunch, and in the very heart of Fez we sat down to a repast entirely Parisian in character from the first course to the last. The wine was excellent, the liqueurs choice ones, and the coffee like nectar. As the doctor is a charming host doubled with an erudite, and as Forestier is as clever with his tongue as he is with his brush, it is not hard to infer that we had a delightful time.

In fact, we are pampered like spoilt children by everybody; we are overwhelmed with kind attentions of every sort by our host and hostess Kaïd Maclean, his brother the Captain, and Dr. Linarès, and I shall always

feel deeply grateful to them for all the thought and care they bestowed on us.

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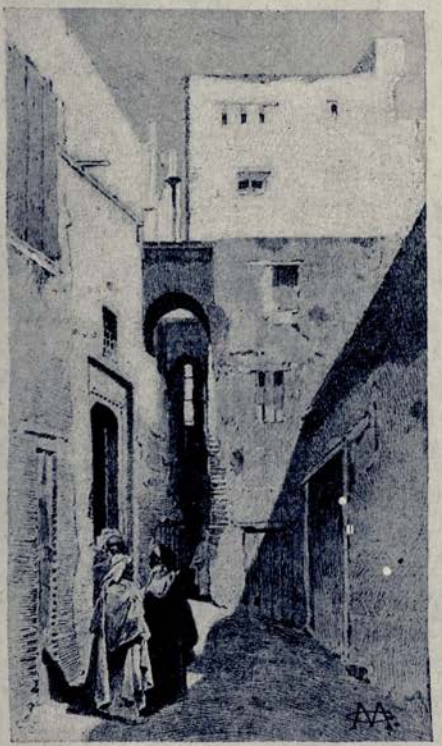
We are to take tea with the Spanish Consul in Fez, Si-Omar-Barada, a Moor, with whom we have had some business transactions. He is going to take us afterwards to call on one of his friends, a rich merchant in the town.

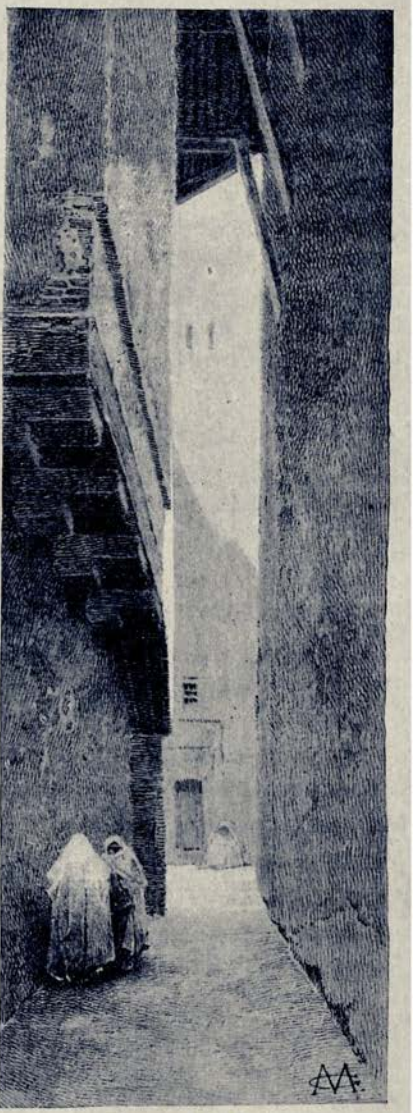


STREET OF THE *BAGSHEESH* IN FEZ.

Through a dark labyrinth of narrow, winding streets he leads us into a still narrower passage, roofed in at a great height, with beams supporting a building. He opens a low door in a high grey wall, and through a bent corridor we enter the mosaic paved courtyard of his dwelling, a pretty house with sculptured and painted porticoes. Slaves bring in the samovar, little glasses of enamelled crystal used as cups, in which we are served five or six times with mint-scented tea. Si-Omar and his friends squatted down on mats at the entrance of one of the long rooms, but he accommodated us with straw-seated chairs. The negress who has served us with tea, examines us from head to foot from the top steps of the staircase where she took refuge, and rows of saucy heads, roguish faces with very dark eyes appear above the gallery of the first storey, only to vanish suddenly as soon as we glance that way. We purchase various things from Si-Omar, and he takes us to his friend's house.

In a dirty street lined by ruined walls we halt before a worm-eaten

door which opens into a noisome courtyard. The centre is quite a sewer with floating rubbish; in one of the corners a dead fowl is putrefying on a heap of filth. We ascend a few disjointed stone steps; Si-Omar knocks, and his friend, a Moor, remarkably neat, with an expressive head and a grey beard, comes and opens the door. After exchanging a lot of courteous salutations we follow him along a narrow meandering corridor, perfectly dark, which brings us to a vast open square courtyard with walls as white as snow, and paved with tile mosaics, surrounded by porticoes. Their columns, white up to the impost, support arches broken by lines bending in graceful curves, their pendentives tastefully carved, their façades covered with arabesque lacework painted in fresh vivid colours set off with gold.



STREET IN FEZ.

Under the arcades, on three sides of the square, ogee doorways, symmetrically disposed, lead into the apartments. The folding doors are entirely dressed with glaring colours, underlined with gold. On a pure vermilion background are displayed, in an inextricable geometrical entanglement, lines, curves, stars, rosettes of blue, green and yellow colours in festooned cinters, enclosed in rectangularly framed bands, whose pale white flesh-

coloured background sacred texts stand out in ultramarine blue letters; and the crudeness of these glaring tints, which kill each other by the very excess of their brightness, is melted into a warm luminous "ensemble" extremely harmonious, forming a strong contrast to the whiteness of the walls.

ENTRANCE DOOR TO A HOUSE IN FEZ.

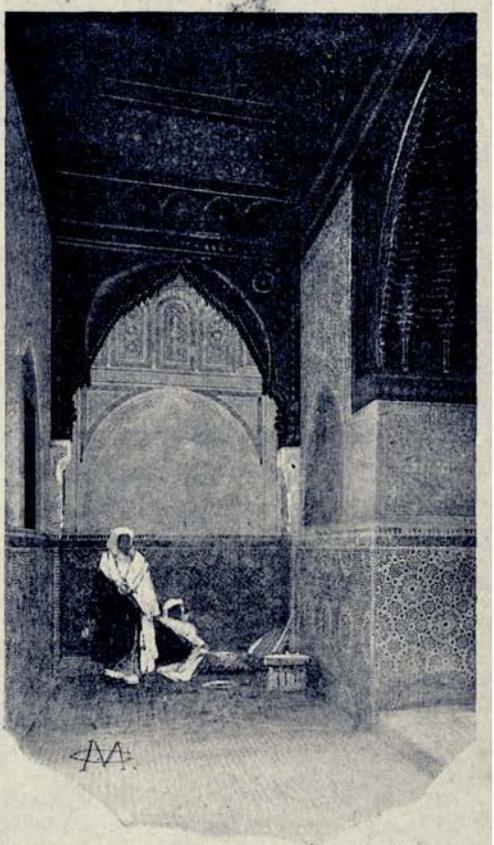
On the fourth side there is a pretty mural fountain; inside an elliptic arch are grouped, in an admirable arrangement, mosaics in tiles of intricate delicious design, whose colours are mixed in a most felicitous way. The water flows into a marble basin in a double jet.

Passing through the door opposite the fountain, on the other side of the courtyard, you find yourselves in a long high room with a ceiling adorned with carved wood caissons decorated with gilded paintings. In the wall, along which runs a high plinth of mosaics, a sort of alcove into which the plinth also extends, opens facing the door. Its floor, also in mosaics, is a trifle higher than the rest of the room, and its aperture is in the shape of an ogee. First it is a pure cinter, then a second broken by stalactites, next a third, afterwards others intermixed with pendentives, alveoles, little ogees entwined apparently in a disorderly fashion, in a series of curves of a close design and mathematically exact.

All these things, painted in ardent colours, in red, green, blue, yellow, set off with gold, hang in a lot of innumerable polished facets over

your heads, forming a vault delightful in its lines, in its colour, in its brilliant fancy. On the mosaic floor are thrown fine woollen carpets of delicate softened shades. The doors on the two opposite sides are closed.

On the first floor, a gallery decorated with coloured *moucharabiehs* fills, to the height of four feet, the spaces between the columns of the porticoes, also painted and sculptured. Under the arcades lower than those on the ground floor, there are likewise symmetrically placed doors. In one of the rooms in which we are taken, carpets cover the floor, and the light comes from grated windows fitted up with coloured glass, through which the sun filters, falling on the carpets, making their colours flash and shine like so many *rubies*, diamonds, and sapphires.



INTERIOR OF APARTMENTS IN FEZ.

When we are descending *again*, the master of the house shows us the kitchen, a little room on the stairs half-way down.

No sooner are we at the bottom than a number of curious little brown faces with *hantouzes* or silk kerchiefs on their heads are bent over the balustrade, eager to see the *Roumis*, and vanish as if by enchantment when we look that way. We imbibe endless cups of tea, take leave of our host, cross again

the abominable courtyard, and Si-Omar-Barada accompanies us to the Kaïd's house.

* * * * * *

This morning Kaïd Maclean ordered Hadj Mohammed, our dear old scamp, to appear before him. It seems that last night, in the house let to Harris by the Pasha, our men were led to indulge in wild revelry, entertained men and women of shady character, and disported themselves in the most frolicsome style. The Kaïd, instead of interfering and exercising his authority to stop the saturnalia, had, on the contrary, exerted the remains of his exhausted strength to put more life into it, playing, in fact, first fiddle in these high jinks.

When he arrived he was a piteous sight. His haggard face under his soiled turban, all awry on his head, his two grey wisps of hair hanging loosely down over his furrowed temples, his eyes sunken, his glassy look, his features sallow, his gait uncertain, all these tokens sufficiently indicated the "rôle" he had played in this little family banquet.

Kaïd Maclean had him seized by two of his soldiers, censured his conduct in no measured terms, severely reprimanded him for his daily thefts, and sentenced him to be bastinadoed. Then feigning to be moved by the tears and promises of the vicious old boy, who had fallen on his knees, he let him off with the lecture he had given him.

* * * * * *

Whenever in the villages, on the roads, in the towns, we have inquired of the Arabs if they knew Al-Aïssouï, the disciple of the great saint Sidi-Ben-Aïssa, the illustrious serpent charmer, they one and all replied they had not the least knowledge of him and never heard his name mentioned. Nevertheless Harris is known by this title right throughout Morocco; he has told us so many times, and even a book of his, recently published by my amiable editor, "The Land of an African Sultan," bears this surname side by side with his own; and in the preface he has taken great pains to inform the reader that he is thus designated through the length and breadth of the vast empire of Morocco. When we told him of our deep surprise at discovering that nobody here seemed to be aware of his existence, he explained, in confidence, that the Sultan, alarmed at his ever-increasing fame, seeing the devotion of his

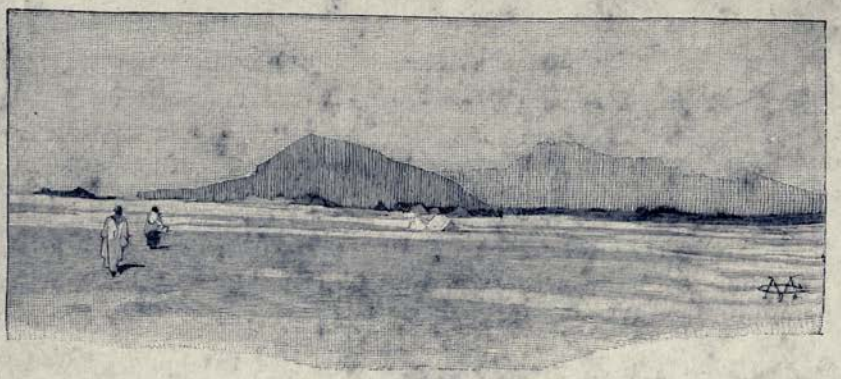
subjects alienated from himself and concentrated on Al-Aïssouï, whose name was in everybody's mouth, and even going so far as to suspect him of a design to overthrow him and reign in his stead, had endeavoured to wean the people from this strange infatuation by prohibiting, under the penalty of death, every man, woman, and child from ever breathing his name. And that is why Harris the Terrible, the darling of Morocco, a sultan embryo, Mouley-Walter-Harris, Al-Aïssouï, the predestinate, was forced by a strange irony of fate, by the jealous caprice of a sultan, to gad about as a common-place being just like one of Cook's tourists, in the midst of a population of eight million Mussulmans, all of whom had his name engraven on their hearts.

But Allah watched over the destinies of Harris and was ready to redress the injustice of fate and thwart the inept precautions of the Sultan. "My Ride to Sheshouan" was now known from one end of the Moghreb to the other. The story-tellers on the crossways, the wandering troubadours under the tents of the Bedouins, the old men under the thatched roofs, were, like enthusiastic rhapsodists, chanting to the sounds of the *gimbry* the never-to-be-forgotten epic of Al-Aïssouï; and in face of these extravagant exploits, these surprising adventures, these miraculous events, the people, in revenge for the veto put upon the name of Al-Aïssouï, had bestowed upon their idol the epithet Bouak-al-Hadj—"The Son of the Pilgrim," or "Your father was a pilgrim"; and when these words were sounded in his ears, Harris was wont to smile an approving smile under his thin moustache and reply, *Salam al Koum*, which means "May peace be with you," or something of the sort.

It is true that the epithet Bouak-al-Hadj was a trifle common, vulgar, trivial even, was sometimes taken as an offence, and generally applied to a braggart, to one who relates stories as dull as ditch-water. But that, as Harris told us, under the seal of secrecy, was simply a stratagem to evade the formal order to suppress his name—an ingenious way resorted to by the crowd to allay the distrust of the Sultan, who could never for a moment imagine that a creature thus designated was ever destined to be the elect who should one day oust him from his throne.

And now under the tents, under the thatched roofs, in the towns, in fact everywhere, the only topic of conversation is Bouak-al-Hadj, the

second incarnation of Harris, who, after charming serpents, now charms men, and is preparing, like Brahma, for his third and final incarnation in the skin of the glorious Sultan Mouley-Walter-Harris Al-Aïssouï Bouak-al-Hadj, the Mahdi of the Moghreb-el-Aksa, and of the rest of the Orient.



THE PLAIN OF FEZ.

In view of Fez, 9th February.

We are leaving Fez to-day; Marshall is better, and Ingram should be in London before the end of the month. Our valises are crammed with objects purchased at Mequinez and Fez. We have splendid gold-embroidered *haïtes*, sabres with hilts made of rhinoceros horn and blades inlaid with gold, rare manuscript copies of the Koran, illuminated like old missals of the Middle Ages, carpets, brocaded fabrics, necklaces, bracelets, curious jewels, pieces of figured silk stuff worked in gold, stirrups, saddles, harness, purple *sulhams*, *ferradjichs*, burnooses, *haïks*, *tarbouchs*, pouches of ornamented leather, guns, in fact, all kinds of things. What raptures of joy when we hang all these treasures over the walls of our studios!

Our mules have been re-shod, our saddles repaired, the bridles and straps patched up, the dislocated baggage-train has been reformed and sent forward. Kaïd Maclean has replenished our provision stores, well-nigh exhausted. All we have to do now is to take leave of our kind hosts and to depart.

We return through the streets by which we came; we pass the great ogee gates, opening in the dilapidated, frowning, lofty walls. We

make our way between the barley fields and tilled lands of the plain of Fez, and descry our tents set up at a short distance from our late camping-ground near the lakes.

Harris, who is always anxious to be the first to reach the goal, digs his spurs in the flanks of his horse, and with a furious blast of his horn, passes like a blowing hurricane between Forestier's mule and mine, and our two beasts, terrified and distracted, set off at full speed and

VILLAGERS.

kick right and left. Forestier's saddle-girth at last gives way, with the result that he is pitched headforemost into the middle of a colza field, and it is with the greatest difficulty in the world that I can master my mule, which, in a spirit of imitation, sought to get rid of me.

Luckily Forestier had no hurt. Our men caught the runaway animal, which was gaily careering about, and we reached the camp without any broken limbs.

Some of the villagers came to-night to beg us to prescribe for one of their people who suffered from dropsy and eye disease, and Harris,

encroaching on Forestier's attributions as our appointed practitioner, followed them and made the sick man take a rhubarb pill, leaving some permanganate of potash ointment for the eyes. He has returned to camp with a light heart, and rejoices in the thought that he has fulfilled his duty both as a Christian and as a medical man.

ON THE WAY TO MEKIS.

Mekis, 10th February.

AGAIN we wake up under the tent. The flowers that we had trodden down when installing ourselves yesterday evening have resumed their wonted appearance. A sheaf of tall yellow marigolds stands close to my pillow, daisies litter the floor, mixed with corn-flowers and anemones, and a fresh breeze, laden with perfumes, glides under the edges of the tent, which swell out with a light rustle.

We skirt, in a northwardly direction this time, the spurs of the Zahroun mountains, whose bristling tops profile themselves in black on the blue sky on our left. On their woody flanks appear circular groups of tents, thatched roofs, and terraces, half hidden in the masses of verdure.

We are now in sandy regions, on table-lands with dales, cut up by gullies and rocky ravines, where slender and stunted shrubs grow with difficulty on a sterile soil.

We meet with a large troop of Arabs. These are people from a distant tribe on a pilgrimage to Mouley-Idriss. They have with them

no mules, no tents, no baggage of any kind, nothing but the clothes they stand in. For the last twelve days they have been journeying exposed to wind, to sun, to rain, sleeping on the bare earth, living on figs and dried dates; poor, light-hearted and careless.

After traversing a series of little wild valleys in a country getting more and more uneven, we halt by a village perched on a hillock descending rather abruptly to the banks of a river that winds in a plain surrounded by a circle of hills and mountains.

The approaches to this hamlet are strewn with dried-up carcases, and foul smells are emitted from these rotten bones. The Sheik does his best to induce our Kaïd to set up the tents within the ring of the village habitations, as the neighbourhood is infested with robbers and not at all safe. A troop of camels is there already, with the drivers, near a pack of gaunt dogs, busy devouring strips of putrefied flesh. We decline the Sheik's offer, and, as we prefer running the risk of being robbed to the certainty of spending the night in the vicinity of these sickening odours, we pitch our camp at a hundred yards from the village, taking good care to avoid placing ourselves to windward of the horrible carrion.

This valley is very picturesque. The river, the Oued-Mekis, a pretty little river with a quiet stream, on a bed of pebbles, winds between banks lined with rushes, willows, rosebays in the middle of a cultivated plain. Around oxen yoked to wheelless ploughs, white ibis flutter, herons hop about, clumsily flapping their wings; at every moment numerous bands of plovers noisily wing their flight. When our men go to the river to water the beasts, wild ducks start out of the rushes, water-hens dive out of sight, and startled blackbirds fly away with strident cries.

The plain sinks between ranges of hills where, from amidst the dwarf palms, are seen brown patches showing where the ground has been rent by the plough. Behind these foremost hillocks files of hills rise above one another, and on the far-off horizon summits of mountains rise aloft. On the northern slopes half-melted snow glistens in the sun with rose-coloured hues.

Marshall, who proves to be more stubborn even than our mules, and

who is hardly recovered from his illness, makes haste to resume his old negligent habits, in spite of our reiterated remonstrances, and takes it into his head to spend the night in his clothes, but without any other protection from the damp cold and morning dew. The consequences of this silly act of imprudence were soon forthcoming, and the result was that the obstinate fellow has been complaining all day long of pains in his back and his head, and this evening he does not seem to be in very good spirits.

I am smoking my pipe while Forestier, hard at work on his "spring number," grumbles at his lazy Pylades, and furiously plies with kicks that insufferable bore Don, who ever and anon makes distracted rushes between his legs, and upsets the complicated and unsteady contrivances of his extemporised working table.

Ingram is reclining on his couch, while dinner is being got ready; but now and then he starts from his slumbers to go and pay sundry visits to the kitchen, to hustle Brooks, and to threaten his dogs with dire punishment.

Harris never leaves the muleteers' tent. He joins in their childish pastimes, takes *gimbry* lessons, improves under their guidance his execrable pronunciation of Arabic, and learns by heart verses of the Koran. As a reward for all this, he treats them every evening to a relation of "My Ride to Sheshouan," teaches them the good manners of the Occident, and rids them of their fleas. These apterous epicures, with a marked preference for white flesh, clamber up his person in close storming order. Some nursed babes forgotten in the hurry of the departure, a few old sedentary fleas of depraved tastes and conservative habits, are the only ones who stay, wearing out their mandibles on the tough epidermis of our muleteers.

When Harris leaves this kennel, we flatly refuse him admittance to our tent, and we beg him to go and shake his fleas elsewhere.

We have parted with Sambo. He was too partial to *kif;* his companions, though not very particular, entertained a dislike for him. So we left him at Fez, and replaced him by another Sambo—Sambo II., a negro with a magnificent jet-black skin.

A relative of the Sherif of Ouezzan, a member of the younger branch, accompanied us since we left Fez. He is going to Tangier, and is glad to accept our hospitality for the present. He has much of the negro blood in him, but his features are rather finely cut. His baggage consists wholly in a sherif's hatchet, and a saucepan with a handle adorned with a tuft of feathers. He has to leave us to-morrow at the crossing of the Tangier and Ouezzan roads, and he will proceed on his way begging for alms.

This humble offspring of the Sherif is a gentleman to the very tips of his fingers. We were made aware of this through an incident which, though of trifling importance in itself, was nevertheless pregnant with significance.

THE OUED-MEKIS.

A big, plump, sleek louse, with chubby cheeks and shiny face, of luxuriant health, with jocund air and bland demeanour, one in fact who looked spoilt, like an old dowager's blear-eyed King Charles's spaniel, was strolling listlessly on Cyclops' neck, warming in the sun some persistent rheumatism of old standing. As the thoroughbred gentleman which he unquestionably is, Mahomet's descendant had delicately seized the promenader between his thumb and forefinger, and instead of then and there throwing him on the ground, or destroying him as one of those coarse fellows from the Occident would certainly have done, he had with the most exquisite politeness deposited him on the hand of his owner, who thus was free to act as he pleased with regard to the fate of his boarder.

Cyclops, who on his side was not lacking in "savoir-vivre," had politely thanked the Sherif; and after examining the prisoner with great

care, and making sure of his identity, he had gently reinstated him in his former post on his neck, remarking that the insect was a paterfamilias, and that he did not wish to make orphans of his offspring, for does not the Koran recommend kindness to animals?

I confess I was deeply moved by this extraordinary forbearance, this sweeping and singular charity, which went so far as to allow oneself to be devoured by the vermin, rather than bring sorrow and mourning unto their families.

I was filled with respectful admiration for this supreme Eastern courtesy, without going to the length, however, of wishing that these customs, so poetically chivalrous, and worthy of the old Abencerages, should take root amongst us. But it behoves me to say that henceforth I always kept Cyclops at a respectable distance, and took precious care to avoid contact with his noble self, lest one of his ravenous and numerous clients, tired with the Arab "menu," should wish to try French "cuisine" for a change, and seek new quarters on my own person.

In the meantime Harris is getting himself initiated into the extra refinement of *maghrebin* high-life by this self-same individual and his companions! Poor man! how far will he go in his imitation of the manners of Eastern genteel society?

A DOUAR OF BEDOUINS.

Along the Zahroun Mountains, 11th February.

THE weather continues splendid and the glorious sun shines in a sky of an intense blue. Fresh breezes blow, perfumed with the odours of trees and plants, and the caravan proceeds gaily through a fertile hilly country irrigated by streams and rivulets.

Still, on our left, stand out harsh and lurid the jagged ridges of the Zahroun mountains. We skirt the foot of their extreme buttresses. On steep hillsides covered with forests and thick undergrowth you descry white towns with belts of walls, fortified villages, rings of Bedouin tents, and up above surge, like the remains of formidable ruined bulwarks, grey ranges of rugged rocks. For a very long time we follow the levels of table-lands endlessly covered with dwarf palms and gorse, through which appear large bare, stony spaces. Then we again come across tilled lands, thatched villages, and again begin the green expanses of dwarf palms and gorse in dreary, infinite, monotonous succession.

We gradually deviate from the Zahroun mountains, which we leave more and more on our left. They are now growing indistinct, and fade away in a uniform blue tint.

A town appears in view, strangely situated on the extreme heights

of two mountains separated by a deep vertical chasm, as if they had been rent asunder by the sword of a giant. The Arabs tell us that formerly there was but one mountain, on which the town stood. An earthquake had severed it in twain, digging an abyss between the towns thus violently parted.

We make a halt for lunch near a brook, and feast on a harvest of watercress gathered by Ingram on its banks. We are at a cross-way, and we have the choice between two routes, both converging to

THE ZAHROUN MOUNTAINS.

Ouezzan. Antonio suggests that we should journey on the levels of the plateaus, the Kaïd strongly urges the expediency of proceeding along the valleys, and the latter course is adopted.

At first there are cultivated lands; we traverse lavender fields, cross multitudes of streams and brooks, and the everlasting dwarf palms make their reappearance. Then the hitherto dry ground grows more flexible, the soil becomes soft; we come to bare sodden tracts that turn into swamps, in an immense dull and mournful plain of mud, in which our mules sink up to their saddle-girths. The sun disappears behind the mountains that encircle us, and we struggle on, plodding behind the

silent and sullen Kaïd, lost in the dull grey extent of these marshes, reeking with an all-pervading moisture. Gradually we outstrip the baggage mules, our train is broken up in distant groups, and each one follows as best he can. The exhausted animals make prolonged halts and are hardly able to start afresh. An icy wind chills our bones, and the distant outlines are growing darker in the blue shadows of the twilight that falls slowly and stretches like a great shroud on the uniform and lugubrious plain.

UNSUBDUED MOUNTAINEERS.

At length, as night is coming in, we emerge one by one, fagged, soiled, from this sea of mud, and we halt on the slope of a hill near a *douar*. Ingram and Harris are the first to arrive with the Kaïd; Forestier and I follow on their heels; then comes Marshall, bent double on his saddle, his features distorted with pain; then we discern through the mist the stiff silhouette of impassible Brooks, and that is all! As far as the eye can search, no trace of our rearguard is perceptible in the darkness, which grows deeper and deeper. The country is ill-famed, infested by bold miscreants always upon the watch to plunder distressed caravans. We are getting uneasy as to the fate of our servants.

Harris, escorted by an Arab of the *douar*, who is riding Ingram's horse, goes out to reconnoitre, and returns after a few minutes. He has discovered our men at the foot of the hill, and they soon make their appearance with the mules. Men and beasts are worn out with fatigue and dripping with liquid mud. The baggage is splashed all over.

Mad with rage, our exasperated muleteers make an onslaught on the Kaïd, who misdirected them. They surround him, hustle and abuse him, and we hasten to interfere in order to pacify them and extricate the old man from their clutches.

The camp is pitched by the light of a fire, which the people of the *douar* have lit within the ring of the tents, as the neighbourhood is anything but safe, and we go to sleep amid the din made by baying dogs and by our guards, who keep shouting to keep themselves awake.

THE SÉBOU.

Aïn-Ali Beni Hassan, 12th February.

WHEN we strike our tents the weather is threatening, the air is sultry, and big clouds roll in the dull and heavy sky. We feel that waterfalls are hanging over our heads.

At first we skirt cultivated fields where Arabs lead their ploughs, drawn by small ruddy-coated oxen. White ibis follow in the wake of the team, pecking at worms and insects in the cut open furrows. Some are resting on the backs of the oxen.

The ground grows more uneven. The gorse and dwarf palms alternate with great bare rocky patches, and on our right, in the far-off distance, the meanders of the Sébou glisten in pale tints in the plain bordered by a range of low mountains.

The sky has become of a livid hue, the clouds are lower, and crawl

heavily, the atmosphere is sultry and oppressive, big drops fall with a sharp sound, the clouds burst, and the rain comes down in torrents. Streams are instantly formed, unite into pools, tumble along the crumbling paths. The wind sweeps the lonesome plain, furiously driving the rain which lashes our faces, rattles over our dripping waterproofs, and we march on, blinded under the howling waterspout, drenched to the skin.

After an hour of this turmoil the rage of the squall abates, the downpour slackens, the sky clears up, and we find ourselves on the banks of the Sébou, whose swift turbid waters speed on boisterously. Its stream is obstructed here and there by sandbanks and enormous darkish rocks.

THE HAJA-AL-OUERKAF ROCKS.

After skirting for some time the abrupt banks, we arrive at the ford.

The descent of the cliff is most arduous. The clay, drenched by the rain, has been transformed into a marsh full of flabby and tenacious mud, where the mules stick fast; and when they do succeed in extricating themselves from this viscous mess, it is only to slide on their hind-quarters, in a succession of alternating slips and tumbles, down a steep slope of a greater consistence, but which the rain has made extremely smooth and slippery.

The Kaïd is the first to enter the river. We follow close behind in Indian file, and our baggage mules come next, led by the drivers wading by their side. The water reaches up to the girths of our beasts; they proceed slowly, hesitatingly, with the utmost caution facing the up-

roarious current, and cleaving it sideways. Now and then they come to a dead halt, with a shudder that shakes their whole frame, stretch out their necks and start afresh, carefully feeling their way, and never setting one foot before the other until they have satisfied themselves that they can do so safely.

We reach the opposite shore without any accident. The bank on that side presents a less hard declivity; the soil is more firm, less uneven than on the other border. We wait in a colza field, under a pelting shower, till the baggage mules and the drivers have crossed the stream.

In front of us, standing dark against the range of hills bordering the horizon, a huge mass of rocks, strangely isolated in the plain, towers aloft to the height of a hundred feet, like a colossal and fantastic animal. The Arabs call it the "Haya-al-Ouerkaf."

It has left off raining, the sky is quite bright again, the sun comforts us with its cheery glow, and after an hour's march through the dwarf palms and the sparse tilled fields, we reach a *douar* consisting of a few houses. This hamlet is situated on the slope of a hill in the valley of the Oued Warghla, and its thatched cottages form picturesque groups in the shade of clumps of tamarisks.

THE OUED WARGHLA.

Sidi-Mohammed-Sherif, 13*th February*.

THE glowing sun, bright and warm, shines in the deep blue ether of a marvellous limpidity. Before us the plain undulates in gentle waves as far as the foot of the Beni M'sara mountains, with indented summits of a very accentuated blue. Farther on, beyond another range of mounts of an extremely transparent greyish blue, you descry the snowy peaks of the Sheshouan mountains.

Harris, with a stately wave of his hand, points them out to us, and, proud of his past exploits, anticipates those to come.

We are close to the Oued Warghla. The sportsmen dismount and wend their way across the fields towards the ford. The scenery is gracefully rustic. Groups of trees relieve the monotony of the great lines of the plain, streams gleam in the tall grass bordered by irises, gladioles, reeds, whence woodcocks wing their flight. Coveys of red partridges rise under our horses' hoofs in the clover and colza fields. Marigolds, that grow thick and strong, stretch in golden sheets by the side of plots of mallows and lavender, exhaling sweet odours. You

skirt the edge of thick clumps of rose-bays, cork-trees, and lentisks. Birds warble under the vaults of greenery; wanton butterflies tumble about, hustled by the breeze; bees are at work, their bodies buried in the chalices of flowers, and emerge, hampered by the pollen that burdens their legs. And the incessant buzzing of the infinitesimal creation, of the myriads of imperceptible winged beings whirling in the air,—the dull sounds of the eternal toil of the innumerable army of insects,—ascends aloft in a confused rumour, like a distant echo from the ocean.

Antonio and his brother Nimrods have not wasted their powder and

THE OUED WARGHLA.

shot. Their bag consists of a score and a half of partridges, quails, and snipe.

The crossing of the Oued Warghla takes place without impediment; we move along the plain, which rises in a very soft acclivity, and brings us to the base of some denuded, barren hills, destitute of any vegetation whatsoever. Near a spring surrounded by stones, at the bottom of a ravine, women are drawing water. The ground grows more uneven, and we descend into gorges bristling with a wild vegetation; then we find ourselves again on woody hillsides with tilled slopes, we come across some *douars*, pass through villages, and suddenly on the flank of a hill we set eyes on a swarming crowd.

It is a market, such as is held on certain days in the villages or their vicinity, sometimes at a good distance, as in the present case, but always on fixed days, on settled sites, and invariably the same.

We move among the people, who one and all scrutinize us with a kindly curiosity. The crowd is gay, very noisy, and good-natured.

Broad-shouldered men from the Beni M'sara tribes, stalwart and supple, with their long guns on their shoulders, the *khangiar* in their belts, have come down from their mountains. They stalk proudly, towering above the crowd, with the red cloth wrapper of their musket round their heads as a turban. There are people from the Gharb wrapped in their rough woollen *haïks*, peasants or *krammès* with simply a tunic fastened round the waist by a leather belt, and negroes clad in ample red or lemon-coloured *sulhams*. Lost in the crowd, tightly wrapped in long scant blue robes, with black caps on their heads, some weazen-faced Jews are worming about with a timid and crafty look and bent back, assuming a humble mien, endeavouring to sell at exorbitant prices their bales of cotton-stuffs—the refuse of storehouses, sent them by their European brethren.

MAN OF THE BENI M'SARA TRIBES.

A number of wretched articles are spread out on the ground, on mats, in *koufas;* seeds, dates, dried figs, flat loaves, kitchen and toilette implements, nails, old iron. The rough fabrics of the locality, clothes, game-bags, dressed leather, are heaped up in some small tents.

Negroes are cooking nondescript messes on small earthen kitcheners, and water-sellers are promenading with their dripping skins.

Our men are plied with questions: "Who are we, whence do we

come, where are we going, what is our errand, how do we live, etc.?" and their replies must be rather strange, judging from the startled expression of the inquisitive ones, and the attention they bestow on all our movements, feeling our clothes, fingering our boots, jostling one another to have a better view of the cabalistic figures that are drawn in Forestier's album and mine.

We leave these worthy people, and go along the borders of a watercourse at the bottom of an extremely fertile and well-tilled valley. This river separates us from the territory occupied by the unconquered

THE RIVER.

mountaineers of the Beni M'sara, through which it would be imprudent for us to journey, to say the least. We therefore take good care to keep on the west bank, where we are in perfect safety.

This side is very steep, and forms a kind of bulwark that abruptly limits the plain stretching to the foot of the mountains inhabited by the unsubdued tribes.

In some parts the bank, whose upper edge we are skirting, rises in almost vertical slope, covered with thickets, brambles, bushes that grow down to tall trees below, along the water edge, opposite copses of willows, rose-bays, and pomegranates, which line the exceedingly

level bank on the other side. From where we stand we are able to scan the wayward meanders of the *oued* winding in the plain, and the harsh lines, the jagged summits of the blocks of the Beni M'sara standing in rugged outline on the sky.

We shortly descry a village, follow a kind of sandy highway right through it, and halt on the top of a hill commanding the river, near some vast buildings, the property of Sidi-Mohammed, a rich and highly venerated relative of the Sherif of Ouezzan.

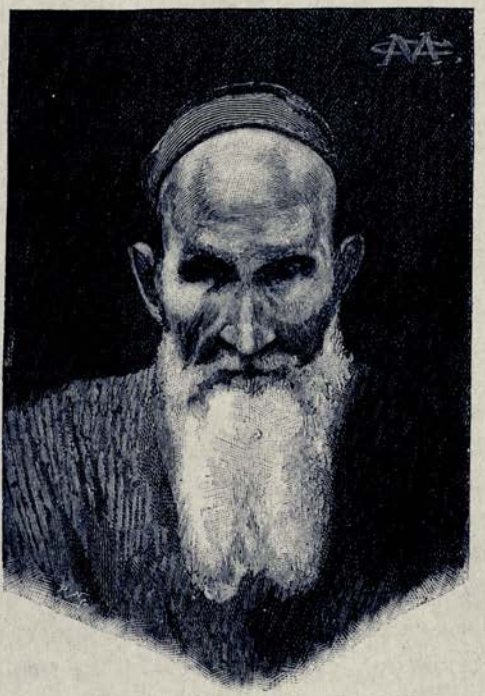
Harris, accompanied by the Kaïd, who remains on his knees, after kissing the threshold of the door, pays him a visit, and is received with affable politeness. Soon after, besides a bountiful *mouna*, quantities of green tea, sugar, and mint leaves are sent us in beautiful china vases with polychrome designs. The Sherif, in his kind attention, has gone so far as to provide us with silver spoons, and a ready-lit stove joined to a tripod of hammered iron, wrought artistically, on which is placed a copper kettle full of boiling water. To all this he has added a superb copper tray, delicately chiselled, bearing, instead of cups, small dainty crystal glasses adorned with designs of rose, green, and white enamel.

Our old gormandiser of a Kaïd makes tea "à la Mauresque"; that is, he nearly fills the teapot with sugar and tea, adds a handful of mint leaves, pours the boiling water, stirs the mixture with a spoon, and in a few minutes we are served with the remarkable beverage. We take a sip of the nectar, and at once put down our glasses almost untouched, to the great astonishment of the old soldier, who, without losing a moment, drains our glasses to the very last drop with peculiar clicks of tongue and loud smacking of lips. Then he greedily quaffs what remains of the decoction in the teapot, which he fills afresh with tea, sugar, mint, and boiling water, and swallows innumerable glassfuls of this sickening syrup, stopping only when the ingredients fail him.

Now that he is glutted to his heart's content, he produces his disgustingly foul, tattered handkerchief, and makes a conscientious application thereof to the tray, the spoons, and the glasses. He was on the point of bearing them back to the Sherif after having wiped them in this fashion, when Brooks, who by chance had witnessed this summary and picturesque cleansing of the tea-things, interfered in

time, snatched them out of his hands in order to wash them thoroughly and return them to their owner.

After this grand feast Hadj Mohammed is in very good spirits, and kind enough to condescend for a consideration, and under seal of secrecy with regard to his co-religionists, to allow Forestier and myself to make a sketch of his old shrivelled and tanned countenance.



LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

OUEZZAN.

Ouezzan, 14th February.

It froze last night, but the sun rose in radiancy, drinking up the moisture of the morning mists, warming the grass numbed by the cold, and the air is fresh and sweet-scented.

Harris waits upon the Sherif to take leave of him, and we resume our journey. We are at about four hours' march from Ouezzan, and we descry the twin peaks of its mountain, standing out very clearly on a sky of great purity.

We are following the summits of steep and rocky hills, which we descend, only to get bemired in the swamps at the bottom of narrow valleys. Then we skirt the banks of streams flowing across meadows dotted with daisies, irises, crocuses; we enter bare gorges where the heat is overpowering. Now the ground changes in appearance, the hills are getting smoother and unroll themselves in quieter depressions; rivulets run in every direction, clumps of trees are seen here and there; we come upon wild orchards encircled by low walls of loose stones, where old gnarled fig-trees are growing with vines twined round their twisted

boughs. The country assumes more characteristic features, and the region becomes more and more wooded; we are following the skirts of thick woods of olives; we meet with springs, around which travellers are halting; we pass numerous herds of oxen with caravans, troops of camels, and, suddenly reaching the end of a plateau, we sight Ouezzan, the holy city of the Sherifs, the Rome of Moghreb, lying at the foot of a mountain covered with groves of orange-trees and olives, interspersed with wide barren and rocky patches.

The town rises in tiers of white terraces, climbing the steep declivity, and from the middle of this sheet glittering with light spring tall square minarets, domes, green-tiled roofs of mosques, and farther on, beyond the hilly masses bristling with sharp points, with slopes climbing one above the other, you see the snowy summits of the Sheshouan mountains.

Harris promises us a generous hospitality on the part of the Sherif, who is a friend of his. He gives us wonderful accounts of the sumptuousness of his palaces, and describes the strange things to be seen there. He expatiates on the gold-fish swimming in marble basins incrusted with massive gold, on the rare furniture, wondrous prayer carpets, and fairy-like gardens. He gives us a glimpse of a prince-like reception with unexpected honours, followed by plentiful *mounas* served in luxurious kiosks, with sculptured, painted and gilded ceilings, walls adorned with silken hangings and gold stitched velvet, surrounded by rich and downy couches.

We make our way down the hill thinking of the sweet things in store for us. The ground is sandy, cut up, covered with dwarf palms, tamarisks, undergrowth of red laurels. Then we ascend a broad road lined with low walls enclosing shady gardens. The middle of this road is a cesspool of liquid mud, where the mules sink in right up to the knees. At a sharp bend it leads us down a steep declivity, and we find ourselves in the suburbs of Ouezzan.

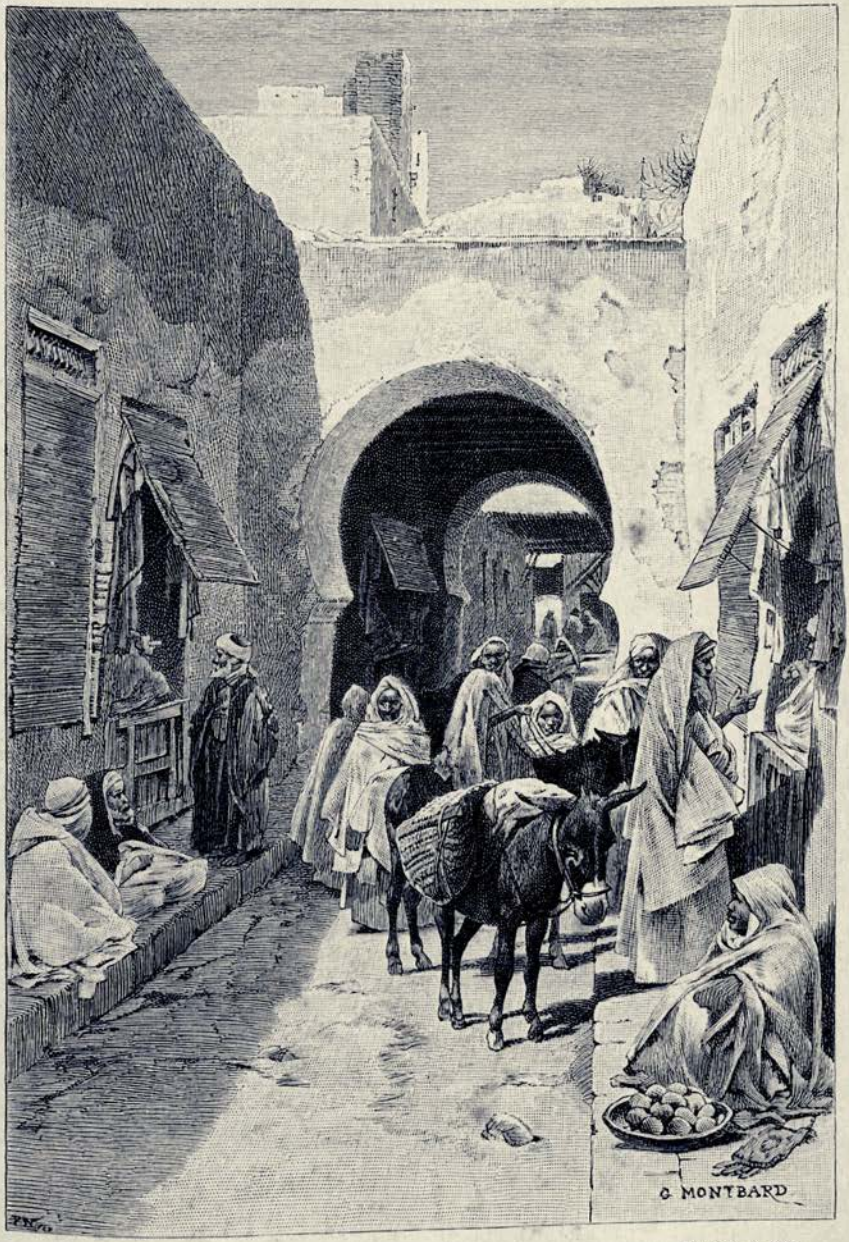
We pick our way along filthy muddy streets lined with vile broken-down huts, we wind through a maze of narrow and dirty lanes, and we stop at a crossway by a mosque, while Harris goes to apprise the Sherif of our arrival.

After an interval of half-an-hour Harris makes his reappearance: he looks utterly disappointed. He had declared his Christian name, surname, and status to the Sherif's secretary, begging him to inform his master of his arrival, and the latter made answer that he, by no means, cared to receive him, that they had no house to lodge us in, and that the best thing we could do was to go and encamp on the *Souk* outside the town. We could not have been informed in a less courteous and more peremptory manner that our presence was importunate, and that we might go to the devil for all they cared.

Harris, horribly vexed at this affront, as wanton as it was inexplicable, leads us towards the *Souk*, and we follow him with all our illusions grievously dispelled. Having reached the square, our men pitch the camp on ground defiled by garbage and offensive refuse, in the middle of a brutal, terribly aggressive crowd of people, who do not scruple to insult us and make coarse gibes at our expense. The old Kaïd, in spite of the free and impartial application of his strap on the backs of the populace, is outmatched, and our men are compelled to come to the rescue and to support him and aid him to drive off some evil-disposed rascals who are bent on examining our tents at too close quarters.

Harris, who is unable to account for this sudden change in the feelings of the Sherif with respect to himself, comes to the conclusion that the secretary has not taken the trouble to inform his master of his presence, and that it was of his own accord that he so cavalierly sent us . . . to encamp on the *Souk*. He entrusts a note for the Sherif to one of our men, and charges him to deliver it personally into the hands of the addressee.

He guessed rightly: the secretary had not acquitted himself of the commission, and had throughout acted on his own authority; for the messenger returns accompanied by an escort of a dozen soldiers, who are to take us and our baggage to a lodge which the Sherif places at our disposal. At the same time he summons Harris to his presence and condescends to offer him his excuses for the uncivil manner in which his secretary has denied him his request, owing to a regrettable misunderstanding. In fact, the latter mistook us for some Germans who



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STREET IN OUEZZAN.

recently, during their stay in Ouezzan, after being very well received by the Sherif, conducted themselves like veritable cads.

Harris, reinstated in our esteem, is beaming with joy, and our hopes once more rise high. We shall at last gaze on the gold-fish, the marble basin incrusted with gold, the fairy palaces, the enchanted gardens, and, who knows! perhaps lovely slaves docile to all our caprices.

Our hearts beating with joy, proudly settled upon our mules, we leave the abominable *Souk* and its motley crowd, who already show some signs of respect, and we wade through the mud after the soldiers, who conduct us to the quarters which the Sherif has provided for us. Our men are put up somewhere or other in the town. Our domicile is indeed a rather small one; it is hardly more than a simple dilapidated portico facing a long narrow room, where they set up our beds. Instead of ceilings resplendent with gilding, there are only rafters innocent of all adornment; for mural decorations, instead of silken and velvet stuffs embroidered with gold, we have naked partitions from which the plaster falls in large scales; in lieu of the rich silken sofas and soft cushions conjured up by our imaginations, the floor is paved with mosaic work, for the most part rough and broken; the enchanted gardens have dwindled into an old deserted kitchen garden, destitute of any vegetation, in whose corners lie in profusion heaps of cabbage stalks and other vegetable refuse mingled with filthy rubbish; there is not even a trace of red fish, let alone the gold ones, and I firmly believe that we shall have to give up our fondly cherished hope of seeing any of the slaves or lovely *almehs* appear in this hovel.

It is not exactly what Harris had led us to expect; indeed, it is quite the reverse. We had anticipated something more luxurious, less scantily furnished. And yet Harris is not a native of Gascony, and there is not, to my knowledge, a province of this name and with like reputation in the United Kingdom. . . . But after all it is perhaps a mistake; the soldiers in their excitement, when setting eyes again on Bouak-al-Hadj, must have lost their heads, and they undoubtedly brought us to the gardener's lodge, in the same way that on our arrival they sent us . . . to the *Souk*. It is certain that matters will be mended to-morrow. Forestier is convinced that such will be the

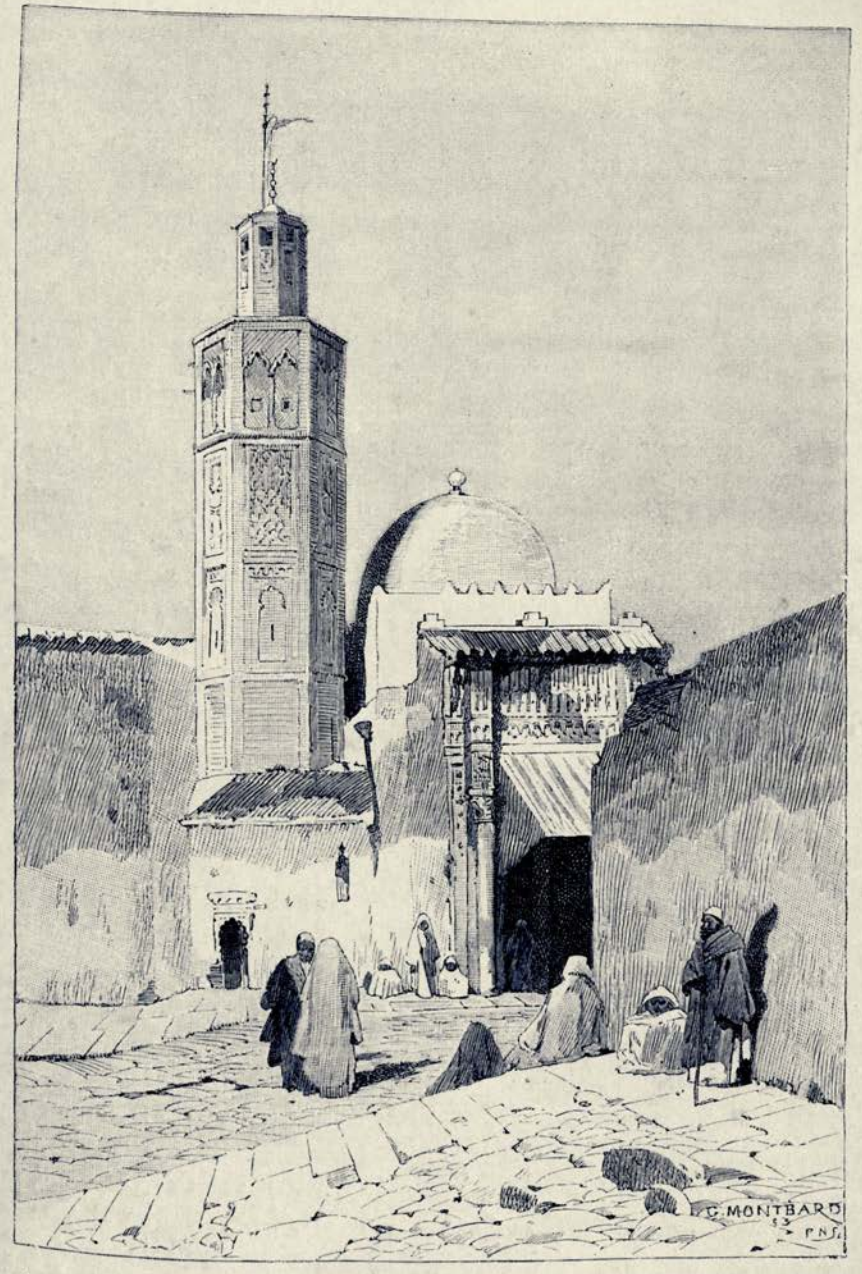
case, and I share his opinion; Ingram devoutly hopes so, and Marshall follows suit. Harris keeps his own counsel, but I am sure he thinks as we do. We go to sleep dreaming of wondrous palaces, of sultans, slaves, houris, and a heap of pleasant Oriental things.

* * *

This morning we take a stroll through the town. The streets are disgracefully unclean and are covered with puddles of mud, bones with flesh still adhering to them, and rotten vegetables. The houses are low, but some few rejoice in European windows with shutters painted blue. The walls are greasy, degraded. We pass under ruined archways, damp vaults full of fissures, and worm-eaten trellis-work.

STREET IN OUEZZAN.

The saddlers' quarter is nothing else but a long swamp of black mire lined with tumble-down shops, where bags of worked leather, shot pouches, and *babouchs* are offered for sale. The clothes bazaar, near that of the goldsmiths', is dark, narrow, very poorly provided with wares. It communicates with an adjunct, a large rectangular square thatched with reeds and resting on huge rafters supported by a row of rough-



MOSQUE OF OUEZZAN.

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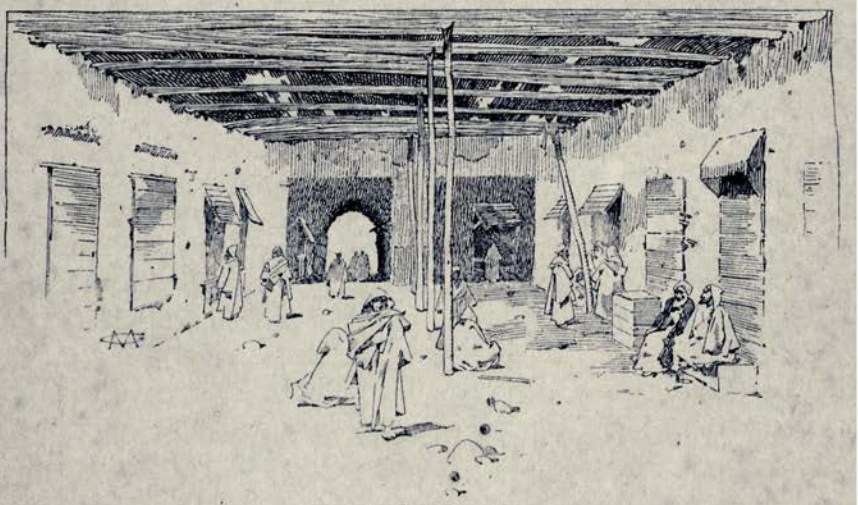
hewn logs, forming a colonnade in the central line of the square. Most of the shops are closed. A motley crowd fills all these bazaars; negroes, Moors, mountaineers, Berbers, Jews, and some European renegades who have settled in the country.

Close to our lodge stands a superb mosque. Its octagonal tower of red brick is inlaid with magnificent white and green tiles in mosaics, framed in ornamental centerings cut out in delicately worked small ogees. The minaret rises above—also octagonal—with a roof of green tiles, surmounted by its file of gilded balls, and topped by a golden



BAZAAR OF OUEZZAN.

crescent. Parallel to one of the sides of the minaret, and towering up above, a cross beam is erected, on which the *muedden* hoists the white flag at the prayer hour.

A very low piece of construction, provided with a tiny door with festooned ogee, a narrow window in the shape of an embrasure, and a roof of dull, discoloured, moss-eaten tiles, rests against the base of the tower.

A large ogee door opening on a square block of masonry, covered over by a large white cupola, leads to the mosque, whose large open square court, paved in marble and tile mosaics and central fountain, we

can very distinctly make out in every interior detail. This court is surrounded by porticoes opening into galleries roofed in with cedar rafters. There are doors at different places in the walls. The arches, with very neat arrises and exquisitely shaped curves, are of a dazzling white. The floor is covered with mats on which the faithful are prostrated.

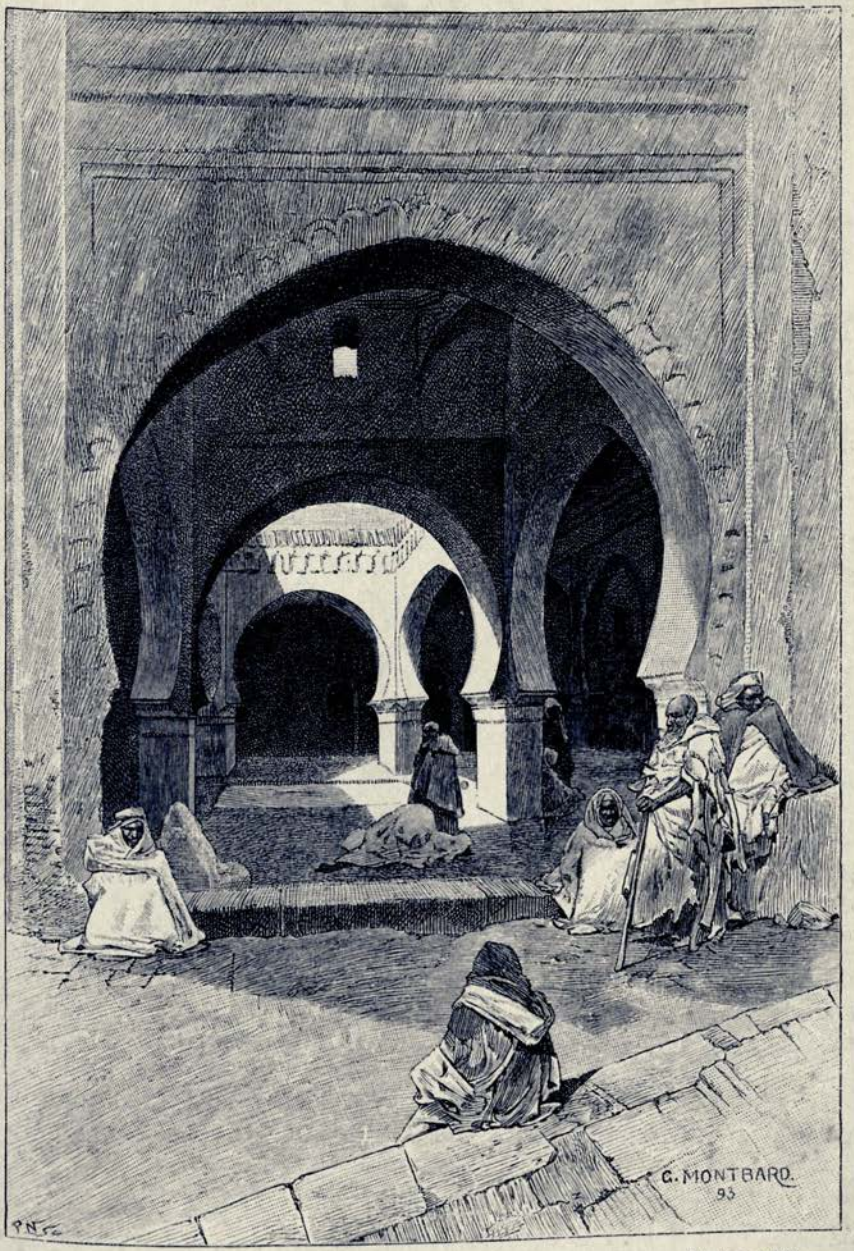
The great ogee archway, with carved voussoirs, in which two columns with Corinthian capitals support a wondrous entablature, is framed in a splendid portal. First it is the architrave, all dressed up with tiles, rosettes and stars interlaced with lines of charming design; then a frieze scooped into a series of arcades, ogees, and interlacings combined with exquisite taste, carved in a lacework of arabesques; and lastly a cornice consisting of a succession of narrow elongated consoles sculptured daintily and supporting a roof of tiles.

The glare of the fiery midday sun imparts to this monumental archway a fairy-like appearance. The balls of the minaret sparkle; the light plays on the tiles, standing out in clear tints on the dusky red of the old bricks, rosed by the sun; the domes and whitewashed walls gleam with blinding radiancy; the tall portal and the minaret's roofs are resplendent with a streaming flood of emerald green flashes, and bluish tints glisten on the marble of the columns. The sun irradiates the whole with his ardent golden beams; clinging to the numberless reliefs of the superb entablature; gliding over the roses and the stars of the tiles in the architrave; accentuating the mouldings of the interlaced ornaments in the frieze; the carved facings of the consoles in the cornice producing unexpected effects of vigorous intensity.

In spite of the noisy and troublesome remarks of a mob of true believers and mendicants who encircle me, I succeed in giving the finishing touches to a fully detailed sketch of the interior of the mosque.

Harris comes to inform us that his highness Sidi-Hadj-el-Arbi, the eldest son of the Sherif of Ouezzan, Hadj-abd-es-Selam, deigns to accord us an audience sometime in the afternoon. We make ourselves tidy, and follow the servant of his highness to the palace.

At last we are going to set eyes on the marvellous things which Harris so eloquently described, and this dazzling prospect fairly sets our nerves vibrating and brings up to red heat our over-excited imaginations.



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INTERIOR OF A MOSQUE IN OUEZZAN.

Leaving the garden we go down an almost vertical incline. We halt opposite a high wall, along which soldiers are reclining. One of these opens a small door leading to a kind of waiting-room—an unfurnished chamber lined with wooden benches—then going through a second door, we follow a narrow passage, go down a few steps into a garden with flower-beds and small sanded paths, surrounded by walls hung with climbing plants, rose-trees, clematis, jessamine. We hear the bubbling of some fountains hard by. In front of us a long, low, white portico with marble columns, supporting ogees with very varied and intricate traceries, stands in front of the Sherif's apartments.

In the middle of the portico, under the arcade, a cedar folding-door, decorated with copper ornaments, opens in an ogee archway supported by small double columns of marble.

We are ushered in by slaves. Selim, who accompanies us, kisses the threshold, and we enter a room with a ceiling of bare rafters. The narrow chamber extends a long way right and left, and is hung with half-drawn curtains by which it can be divided, when necessary, into several compartments. The middle of the room is paved with mosaics. At the foot of a wide staircase facing the entrance door and leading to the divan there is a curious ill-shaped object made of wood and copper, which does duty for a chandelier, and between its branches jets of water flow without touching the grotesque structure.

We have not yet realised our dream of the "thousand and one nights," but ere long we shall probably be shown into the famous gilded chambers. The present room can only be a sort of hall for receiving people who are not on the visiting list.

On one of the sofas Sidi-Hadj-el-Arbi is reclining, dressed in a blue *sulham* and a silk *haïk* as white as snow, and occupying himself with cutting pieces of cardboard with a pair of scissors. Two straw-seated chairs of white wood and cushions are brought in for us.

Hadj-el-Arbi seems to be about thirty years of age. He has a swarthy complexion, very dark eyes, rather heavy eyelids, thick lips, and a slightly prominent aquiline nose. On his pleasing face there is a proud and refined expression, and the whole aspect of the man seems to wear an air of polite disdain, languor, and kindly feeling.

Tea is served. He asks to see our sketches, which he examines with some interest. Then he invites us to accompany him to the divan, where we sit down, our legs crossed in Oriental fashion, on mattresses covered with carpets, among his ministers and councillors, by the side of a big gawky creature, with a deranged nervous system—a sort of laughing-stock, a buffoon, unconscious of the part he is playing.

We converse a little through Antonio and Harris, who act as our dragomans; tease now and again the wretched noodle, who starts at every movement we make, and drain a few more cups of tea scented with mint, vervain, and amber. The Sherif graciously makes Harris a present of a very pretty Smyrna carpet, and we then take leave of our amiable host and return to our quarters.

On our way Forestier cast a glance into the basin into which the jet of water flows in order to get a glimpse of the famous gold-fish. It is true he saw an old, snuffy salamander, but not the least trace of the most attenuated bleak or of the tiniest gudgeon. Harris forestalls our questions by explaining that Si Ali, the Sherif's secretary, informed him that they died last year from inflammation of the lungs, which was brought on by a cold they had caught after the candles of the chandelier had been put out.

When we express our surprise at the bareness of the walls and the ceilings, the scarcity and the indifferent quality of the carpets, and finally at this more than Spartan simplicity, when, led by his descriptions, we expected to find dazzling luxury, Harris at last discloses with a sigh the sad truth. The poor Sherif is at the present moment awfully in want of cash, thanks to the wild extravagances of his father, who is married to an English lady and settled in Algiers, where he is living in grand style, too grand, even for a Sherif, and Sidi-Hadj-el-Arbi, like a good son desirous of rendering monetary assistance to his illustrious parent, and of paying a few pressing debts, resolved to turn everything to account. He has sold or pawned the beautiful *haïtes* embroidered with gold, the silk and velvet cushions, and the superb prayer carpets; he has let his magnificent gardens, got rid of a part of his wardrobe and his harem, and has gone even so far as to scrape off the gold from his panels to turn it into hard cash. All this has been done to fill the gap

made in the treasure of the Sherifs by his amiable sire, who is a great epicure and very fond of costly dainties.

We have now bidden adieu to our last, lingering illusions. The Pope of Morocco reduced like a penniless prodigal to pawn his knick-knacks, and to make the shady acquaintance of "uncle," seemed highly improbable, but it was, unfortunately, strictly true.

NEAR OUEZZAN.

Near Ouezzan, 16th February.

We set out in dull cold weather. We leave the town by one of the two gates that open on to the *Souk*, which we cross. For some minutes we follow a miry path lined by a hedge of cactuses and aloes on either side; then leaving the gloomy ruins of the old Ouezzan on our right we come into the open country. In front of us stretches a succession of plateaus bounded on the horizon by mountain peaks shaded by mist. The soil is sandy, covered with dwarf palms. The weather clears up a little, but it still continues cold.

The plateaus have given place to a number of low, steep hills crowned with rocks. We wind round the declivitous slopes, and in the valleys we skirt along streams that have dug their deep beds in the sand, and flow clear and fresh between banks lined with rose-bays, pomegranates, cork-trees, that form an almost continuous leafy arbour, beneath which we hear the water rippling over the pebbles. The sun has come out; the sky is of a fine deep blue.

On an abrupt, rocky ascent, bare of any vegetation, furrowed by the rains, scorched by the sun, we meet with an invalid lying on his back, with scarcely any covering, on an ass led by another Arab. The poor wretch, racked by fever, groans frightfully; his limbs dangle along the legs of his beast; his head tosses to and fro on the croup. Now and again the animal stumbles or slips on this rugged ground, then the body

A CEMETERY.

is shaken in a frightful manner, and you hear a heartrending cry. Far away in the distance vultures follow the lugubrious group.

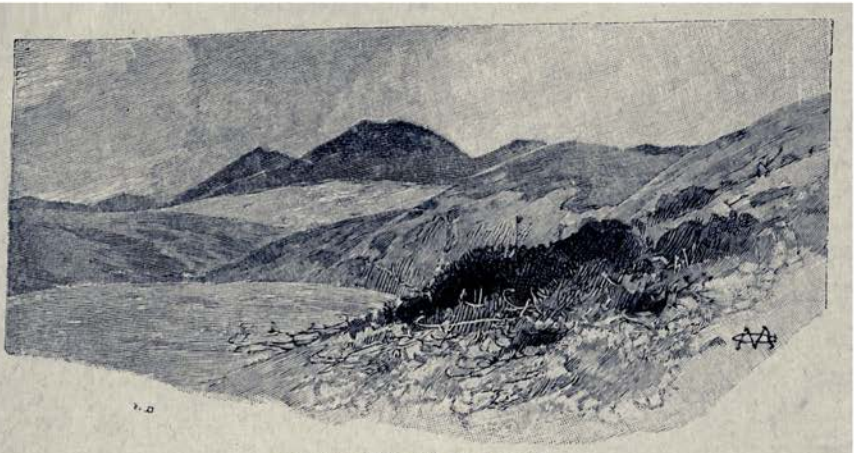
The hills become woody. We follow a pretty sandy road along the flank of a ravine. At the foot on our left runs noisily a stream through clusters of trees of various essences; on our right every part of the hill to the very top abounds with olive-trees centuries old, with enormous gnarled trunks cut through by wide fissures, and their huge branches

twisted in fantastic curves stretch high over our heads. Thatched houses rise between the trees, echeloning on the side of the hill.

As it leaves the gorge, the stream, obstructed by an enormous, almost vertical, limestone cliff, nearly a hundred feet high, forms an underground channel, and emerging beneath a broad archway falls into a pool dug in the sand, and surrounded by big blocks of detached rock. Women with copper and earthenware pitchers come here to draw water.

The path continues to wind along the flank of the hill on the borders of the olive wood, which is used as a burial-place by the villagers, and numerous white slabs on mounds of earth mark out the graves. Down below on the left mountains and valleys rise and fall in low undulations, and far in the distance we can see on the horizon a band of light—the Atlantic.

On the hillside, not far away, our men pitch the camp near a hamlet surrounded by orange- and olive-trees.



ON THE WAY TO AL-CAZAR.

On the way to Al-Cazar, 17th February.

UNDER a glowing sun, in a dazzling blue sky, we break up the camp. For two hours we journey across a group of hills, uniformly covered with dwarf palms, ferns, and gorse. Then we issue forth to a wooded, fertile, well-cultivated plain, watered by numerous streams and full of life. Rushes, irises, grow in thick masses, and willows, with a profusion of shrubs, plants, flowers, overspread the banks with the network of their exuberant vegetation. The waters teem with little fish, and when the frightened shoals, scared by our presence, make a sudden dive and dart through the clear water, their scales flash again; tortoises are swimming beneath the surface, frogs are leaping on every side, and long green snakes crawl silently in the grass under the large leaves; the perfumed flowers, glide into the water, cross the stream with head erect and fixed eyes, and are lost in the verdure on the opposite bank.

We ride along narrow, intersecting paths of fine sand, between grassy plots dotted with blue daisies, gentians, mallows, and on either side unroll fields of lavender waving under the breeze, of colza, barley, and

clover. Larks trill their passionate notes in the deep azure; men with bronzed features, bare arms, and garments tucked up to the waist, are guiding their light ploughs; fresh breaths pass with strong balmy odours, and the sun irradiates with his luminous splendour, fecundates with his warm caress the earth palpitating with life, swelling laden with humus, gorged with essences.

We leave these fertile plains and pass on to sandy tracts. We find again the endless expanse of ferns and dwarf palms, the barren, stony grounds covered with gorse, thorn bushes, the numberless rocky ridges, the wild valleys with streams of clear water between verdant banks; the vast dismal regions without villages, without houses, without tents, where there are neither men nor flocks, where only the vultures soar overhead with hoarse cries.

A last plateau which we cross through lentisks, gigantic gorse, that lash our faces at every step, brings us to a group of hills bending in ample and soft curves, partly under cultivation. The crude and harsh tints of the brown, green, and yellow fields contrast with the monotonous hue of this sea of verdure. On the side of one of the hills rise the thatched roofs of a village.

The road follows the bare banks of a rivulet, which widens out here and there into broad pools. We leave on the left the ruined tomb of a saint, sheltered by a clump of olive-trees, and near the *douar* we come to a halt. The sportsmen, except Marshall, who is still ailing, have gone shooting, and the men pitch our camp.

This evening the villagers are merry-making. We hear the shrill notes of the bagpipes and the flutes, and the roll of the tabors. As the night is very clear, we distinguish the silhouettes of men pressed close together, linked arm in arm in a circle, bending backwards and forwards with a jerky rhythmic movement, and uttering in accord a hollow cry, a sort of smothered doleful lamentation, each time they bend their bodies. One of the men is in the centre of the circle, twisting and turning himself in a violent lascivious fashion, clapping his hands to beat time. Now and again one of the dancers gives a shriek and falls foaming on the ground. They carry him off, an Arab from the crowd takes his place, and the dancing goes on more lustily

than ever, while the bystanders continue to clap their hands, beating an accompaniment to the modulations of the orchestra of flutes, tabors, and bagpipes.

On drawing nearer we are greatly amazed to see in the centre of the circle of dancers our worthy Selim, very wide-awake, with gleaming eyes, disporting himself with the lewd gestures of an ape.

As the merry-making threatens to go on for ever, we return to the camp, and for a long time the noise of this wild revelry prevents us getting to sleep.

* * * * * *

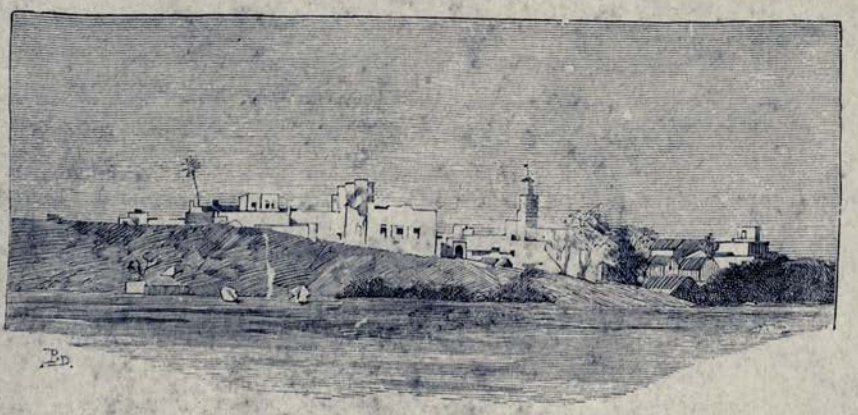
This morning the sun is dazzling, the heat oppressive. The sportsmen brought back, yesterday, fifteen brace of partridges, a hare, and a few quails. As the country abounds in game, we are going to stay a day longer to massacre a few more poor birds.

Oh, these fanatic sportsmen! How many times Forestier and I have vowed to sacrifice them to the gods infernal, when in order to glut their sanguinary and irresistible passion for killing a brace of partridges, a hare, or a dozen larks, they have forced us to dawdle on over monotonous wearisome plains, absolutely devoid of any interest, while close by were curious ruins, wonderful landscapes, and picturesque rivers.

Mequinez, with its majestic and mournful sadness, its splendid gateways, ravaged by centuries, and its imposing ramparts with broken crownings; Fez, with its frowning disjointed walls, its mysterious mosques, its quaint streets, and strange people; Ouezzan, that curious city of the Moghreb; Al-Cazar, Al-Araish, Arzilah, all these wonderful towns, failed to excite in them any other feeling than weariness and deep disgust, never meant more to them than piles of ruins, and labyrinths of dirty streets, from which they were always eager to escape in order to "make speak the powder" to the ears of the rabbits in the plain.

A flock of sheep, which he lost no time in photographing, was sure to interest Ingram far more than the old dismantled gateways with their dull and solemn aspect; Harris never saw in these curious and silent cities of Islam anything except the bazaars, and in the bazaars an

opportunity of making a good bargain; Marshall made a point of parading his careless indifference to everything. And we two, Forestier and I—victims of this maniacal partiality to flocks of sheep, of this insatiable desire to worry, with luxurious hammerless guns, the lives of inoffensive Moorish partridges, of the censurable contempt for things of an original and supreme beauty—we quitted these bewitching towns of the East with bitter regret, and in a pensive mood we followed in the wake of the implacable Nimrods over the vast lonely plains.



AL-CAZAS

Al-Cazar, 19th February.

We strike the camp rather late. We are only two hours' journey from Al-Cazar. Leaving behind us the cultivated fields, we proceed along broad ridges through heather and gorse, we follow wooded gorges and slopes, and soon we come to plains of gorse and dwarf palms, where brooks and pools of water gleam in the sun. We traverse swamps by a bridge or rather a series of low, ruined arches covered with brushwood, weeds, lichens, and we reach the banks of the Kous.

The river is shallow. In the stream men are washing skins spread on wooden trestles, women wade across holding one another by the hand, forming a kind of chain. We make, easily, our way to the other side, where we land on a paved road, rising in almost vertical ascent to level ground, which continues in a succession of lakes of mud, lined with broken stone footpaths, between garden fences.

These are old rickety walls, corroded by yellow lichen, carpeted with moss, bindweeds, jessamines, convolvuluses; wooden, worm-eaten palisades, almost entirely hidden by a wild rampant overgrowth of enormous hemlocks, huge fennels, tall red gladioli, and gigantic acanthuses.

Behind these tumble-down walls, these disjointed palisades, extend

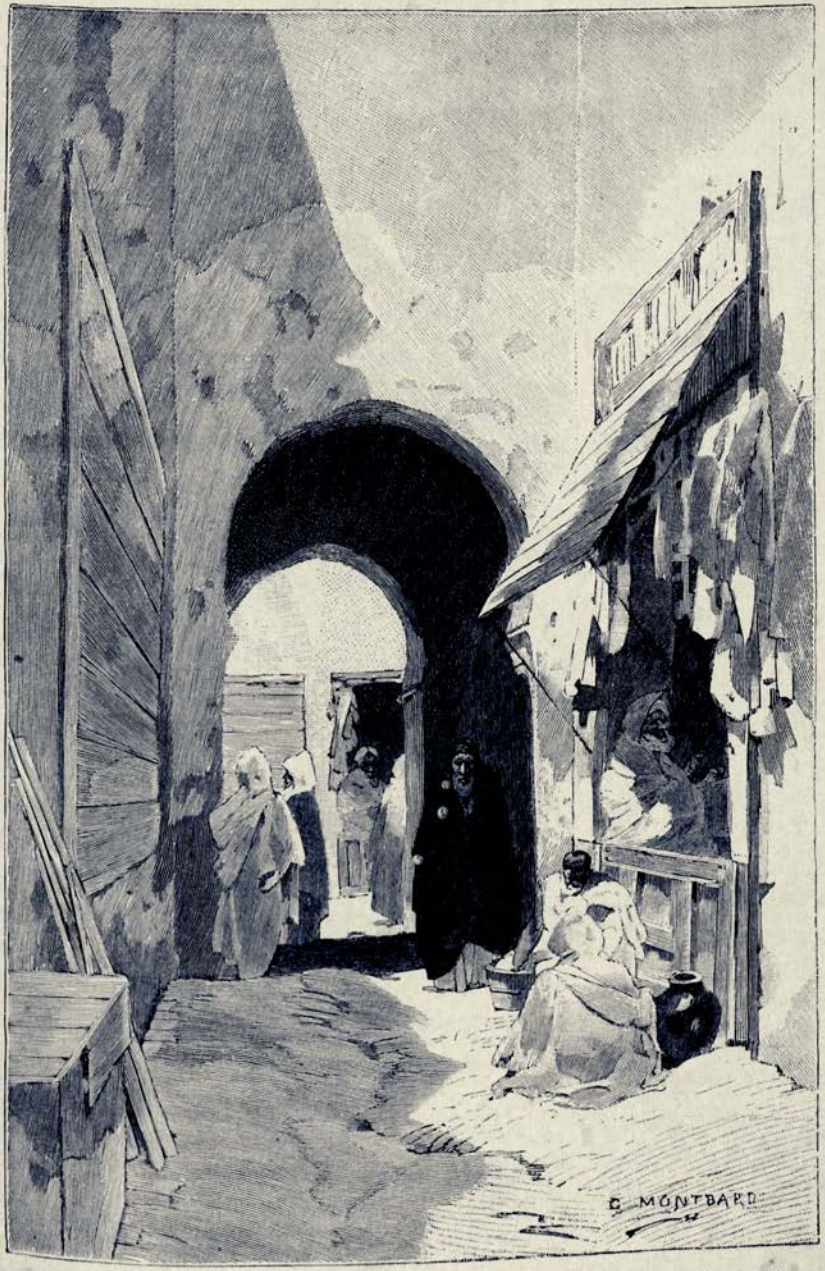
immense orchards, and mixed with palms, aloes, cactuses, appear groves of orange-trees, pomegranates, and lemon-trees, together with impenetrable masses of entwined plants, blue borages, stocks, periwinkles, geraniums which grow in the form of trees, and verdant flowery spots. Tomtits, finches, orioles, flutter in the foliage with endless twitterings, and storks fly from tree to tree lashing the air with their heavy wings. A sweet and strong odour rises from all these flowers, these plants, these trees, and fills the air with its keen delightful perfume.

We are now in the suburbs of Al-Cazar: ruined hovels girded by

THE KOUS.

dung-heaps, and a little farther off we halt outside the town on a bare patch strewn with chopped straw, feathers, fowls' legs, half-picked bones, vegetable refuse, and we pitch our tents on this spot, where layers of filth left by the caravans in their successive encampments have accumulated for centuries. Round about us are marshes where washerwomen are at work.

Al-Cazar, lying very low, very dingy, profiles on the blue sky, its grey walls tinged by the sun with a rosy hue. Intermixed with the terraces rise double roofs of red tiles with double slopes amid clumps of trees, and on all the tall square towers of the minarets, storks are standing motionless near their nests of boughs. Some of them on the topmost summit of



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THE BAZAAR AT AL-CAZAR.

the minaret are resting on one leg, and seem like terminal embellishments in stone.

We enter the town by an ancient ogee gateway, undermined at the base, worn at the angles, warped, decayed. One imagines more than he sees on its voussoirs, that there are festoons of arabesque with worn-out arrises, and effaced lines. We flounder in puddles of mud, splashing the passers-by, who repay us with usury. We pass under other dilapidated gateways, gloomy vaults; we penetrate in labyrinths of winding narrow streets, cloacæ redolent of sickening smells, where scarecrow

AL-CAZAR.

creatures in filthy rags crawl along with livid faces. They sally forth like big rats from yawning gaps in greenish walls that ooze with moisture.

We reach the bazaars, protected from the sun by cane and reed mats stretched over the cross-beams, which admit only a faint diffused light, and in this semi-obscurity the shopkeepers are squatting in their dark holes; in front of their stalls hang leather, harness, and esparto work of every kind.

The goldsmiths' bazaar is occupied entirely by Jews, who sell silver collars, bracelets set with precious stones, and jewels of every design and epoch.

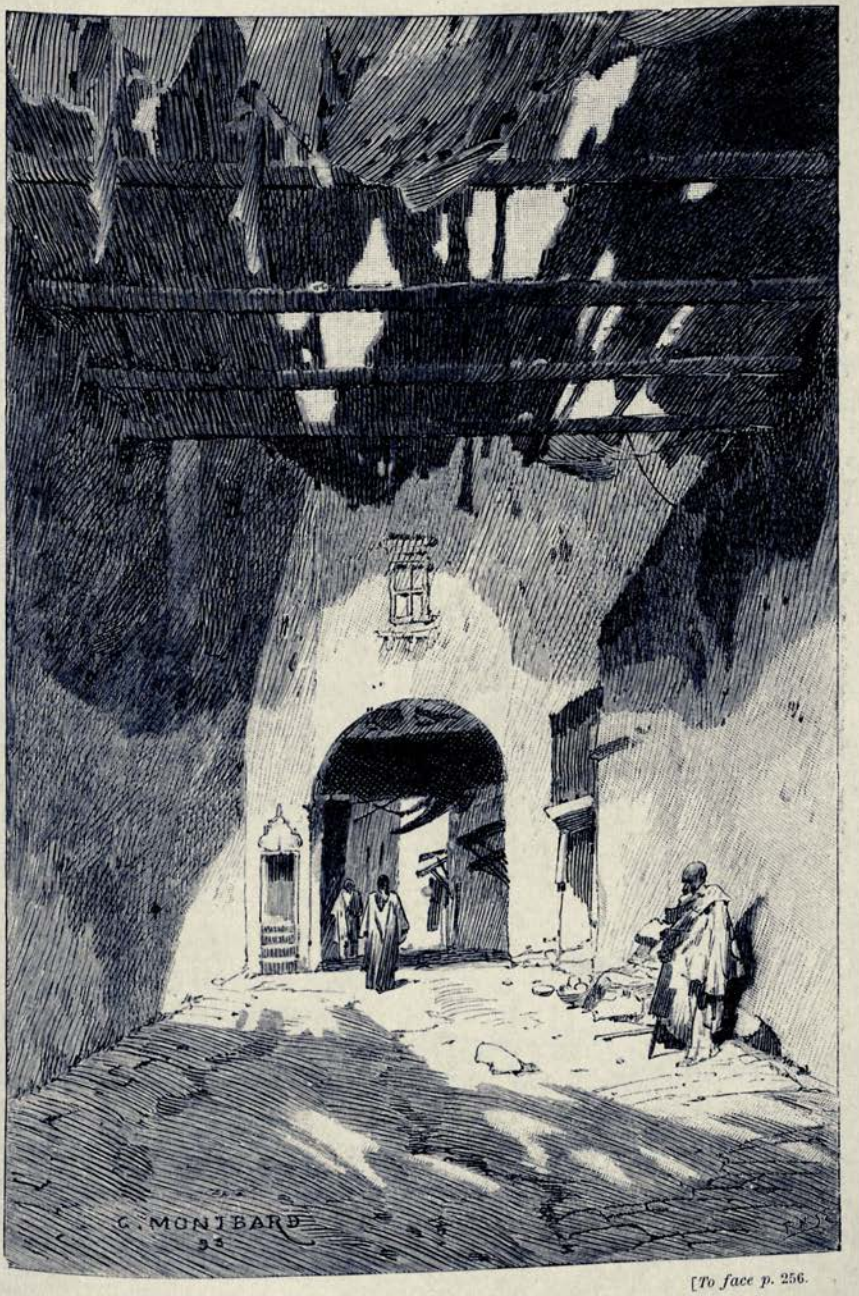
We leave the bazaar by another gateway, facing a large, paved square, encompassed by big bare houses with roofs of red tiles. Against these houses are propped horrid, little shops, rotten and dislocated, where stuffs of various sorts are sold. All round the square Arabs are squatting, some selling fruit and vegetables, others fish. Here sacks of wheat are heaped up, which are put up for auction; there "bric-à-brac" dealers have spread out on planks, laid on the ground, a few miserable articles of antediluvian manufacture. Perspiring water-carriers move about clinking their goblets among the numerous groups clustered over the square. We make our way through the crowd, and return to the camp by another ogee gateway, more dilapidated, more decayed than any we have seen, and only kept together by a marvel of equilibrium.

A NEGRO MUSICIAN.

For some minutes we hear from the town a great flourish of musical instruments, the squeaking of bagpipes, the piercing notes of flutes, and the roll of tabors. Then burst forth incessant cracks of gunshots, shouts, yells.

All at once we see sallying forth from the gate opposite our camp a troop of magnificent horsemen, gorgeously attired, followed by a yelling rabble in grey burnooses.

A young man about twenty-five, of very distinguished appearance, precedes the cavalcade. His features are delicate, his large eyes are soft and bright, and his black beard is as fine as silk. He is, so we are told, one of the Sultan's brothers, and is going to preside over and



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A STREET OF AL-CAZAR.

take part in a fantasia, in honour of the circumcision of the son of a great personage who lives at Al-Cazar. The crowd has invaded every vacant spot, and is kept back in line while the horsemen, with the Sultan's brother at their head, take up their position.

They have really a very noble appearance, these handsome Semites, with their proudly modelled heads, their expressive features, these sinewy men with impassive faces, concealing beneath their cold dignity the ferocity of a wild beast. Seated on their high saddles of embroidered velvet, they flourish with their bare arms their long guns begirt by silver

THE SOUK AT AL-CAZAR.

rings, scarcely touching their gold-chased stirrups with the extremity of their naked feet. They are dressed in *caftans* of purple, saffron, amaranth, "bleu de roi" colour, in silk burnooses of pale green, celadon, reddish hue, with hoods half thrown back over their turbans, and enveloped in the flowing veils of their fine muslin *haïks*. Their horses, accoutred in velvet, gold, and silk, prance, rear, foam, and refuse to form into line.

All at once the young chief utters a shrill, prolonged cry, the riders plunge their spurs into the flanks of their steeds, and these, rushing along at a furious pace, foaming, and their manes floating in the wind,

dash past us like a flash of lightning, carried away in a vertiginous gallop. You hear a clank of arms, a loud panting of beasts, and in the rapid whirl of these white phantoms you only just perceive through a cloud of dust floating burnooses, fluttering gauzes, rose, blue, purple, garnet fringes of caftans, bronzed arms, gleaming gun-barrels, fierce

THE FANTASIA.

faces with flashing eyes. Suddenly the riders throw themselves back till their heads touch the croups of their horses, utter with one accord a hoarse cry, fire off their guns at the same time, and, by a brusque movement, halt in the midst of their mad career. Then, amid the plaudits of the enthusiastic Arabs, they ride at a walking pace their foam-covered horses back to the starting-point, and begin afresh their furious gallop, their frenzied fantasia.

In the crowd groups of mountaineers dance, leap, and circle round, firing through each other's tibiæ, giving vent to terrible cries.

As the twilight falls the horsemen form into marching order, to the exasperating sounds of the tabors and flutes, the bagpipes begin again to wail, and the brilliant escort, followed by the tag-rag and bobtail in grey woollen tatters, return within the walls of Al-Cazar.

The whole night long they held bacchanalian revelry in the town, the music never discontinued, gunshots were constantly cracking, the shouts and yells never ceased. The frogs in the marshes hard by, joining in chorus, croaked an accompaniment to the tumult; while the miasma of the swamps, the morbid emanations from the layers of filth on our camping-ground driven by the wind, penetrated into our tents.

THE OUED WARROUR.

N'sala Borian, 20th February.

We leave Al-Cazar and its sickening smells, we cross its odorous gardens, and we now march on its fertile plains. Then the mournful landscape begins again, the fields of asphodels and the hills covered with heather.

We pass near a village; for a long time we hear the dogs barking after us. The neighbourhood is charming, watered in every direction by streams flowing between plantations of olive-trees, groves of orange-trees, and thickets of myrtles, bay laurels, cork-trees.

With regret we leave behind us the delightful oasis, and continue our way across interminable arid plains, finally halting at the bottom of a valley, where oxen are grazing on the banks of a stream shaded by olive-trees. Two Arabs are lying here under an olive-tree, near an ass laden with sacks of corn.

The brook intersects the road. On one side it bubbles placidly over pebbles and smooth blocks of stone, winding round an enormous rock, riven, corroded, spotted with green moss and yellow and reddish-

brown lichen. Two fig-trees that have taken root in a large crevice are jammed together so tightly that their twin trunks have grown into one another, and the enormous trees cover a broad space with its shade. Jessamines, bindweeds, honeysuckles climb round the gnarled trunk, twine round its twisted branches, and their drooping tendrils reach down to the surface of the limpid water. Thick clusters of myrtles line the opposite bank. On the right, on the other side of the road, the river has dug a channel in the soft soil of meadow-land, covered with fine grass, rock roses, daisies, irises, and flows tranquilly between beds of rushes, water-lilies, anemones, bathing the roots of the clump of olive-trees, under the shade of which we repose.

Oxen, up to their flanks in water, are taking deep draughts; then lifting their heads, they stand motionless with necks stretched out, dripping muzzles, gazing at us with their big soft eyes. Frogs,

MARSHY PLAINS.

disturbed by their presence, plunge with a loud splash into the water, tortoises swim from one bank to the other, dragon-flies dart by flashing like sapphires, amid swarms of mosquitoes, and thousands of butterflies flutter in wayward flight all around us.

It is one o'clock. The two white-bearded Arabs, our neighbours, have spread their carpets, prostrated themselves, and repeated the second prayer of the day.

We resume our march across fields of lavender, silent wastes, in-

THE HAMLET.

variably carpeted with heather as far as the Oued-Warrour, whose denuded, barren borders are parched by the sun.

While crossing the river one of the pack mules deviates from the narrow ford, loses its footing in a hole, and sinks with its load in the water. Our men run to its assistance, and after great exertion enable it to reach the bank.

We halt for a moment. Among the drenched baggage are one of Forestier's portmanteaus containing his fur cloak, and a trunk of Ingram's packed with linen. These are opened; their contents are spread out in the sun. Half an hour later they are quite dry, and we continue our way.

At a short distance from the Oued we halt near a hamlet and pitch our camp.

* * * * * *

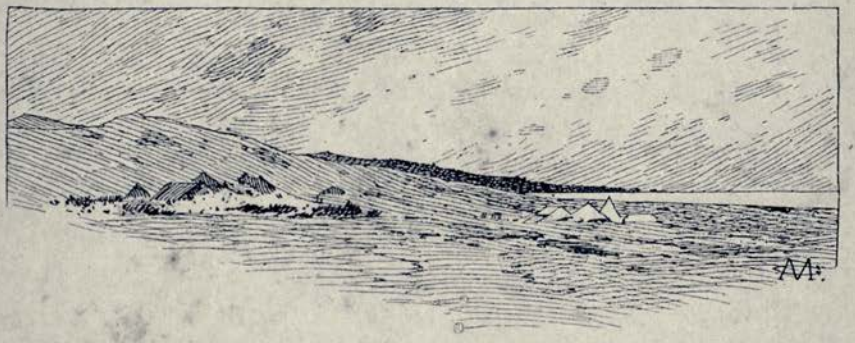
The weather keeps remarkably fine, the sun is gaily bright, and the blue sky without a cloud. We strike the camp and set off.

At first there are but wooded slopes watered by streams; then following the ridge of a long plateau, sparsely dotted with ferns and gorse, we come to a region of ruddy sand and rocks, absolutely arid, of a heartrending solitude. The ground is wild, piled with enormous grey bare rocks, furrowed and crossed by ravines. In this Sahara-like spot there are dazzling reflections, and the heat is suffocating. The mules advance slowly, stumbling at every step, and with difficulty avoiding deep ruts with crisp margins that crumble beneath their feet.

All at once the fore-quarters of my mule are buried out of sight. I describe a geometrical curve in space and fall flat on my face in the sand, with my arms stretched out, two yards in front of my beast, who, with her front legs and shoulders sunk in a hole, makes desperate efforts to extricate herself. We manage to get her out at last, and after putting the harness to rights I get into the saddle again and we push on under the broiling sun.

Now and again between two rocks we catch a glimpse of the sea, which gleams like molten silver, and of the transparent greyish blue headland of Cape Spartel.

The rocks gradually disappear; we jolt up and down over sandy ridges while the heat grows still more stifling.



THE ATLANTIC.

In the midst of the dreary desert a man suddenly appears on the crest of one of these sand billows. With an oil-cloth satchel strapped across his shoulder, almost naked, he advances at a running pace. The perspiration streams from his brow, and the sun shining on his bare limbs makes them glitter like bronze.

He said something or other to our men, saluted us without stopping, and sped on over the burning sand, under the relentless sun.

He is a *rekka*, a courier carrying the mail from Tangier to Fez. And he will hold on his course at this rate for hours together, hardly taking time to eat or to rest, pushing on across mountains, plains valleys, at his swift, unvarying step. He will swim swollen rivers,

struggling against the terrible currents, the treacherous eddies; his skin will get tanned by the fierce sun, the nipping winds, the diluvial rain, and still his horny heel will tramp on the ground at an indefatigable, unchanging pace, and the perspiration flowing from his limbs will be absorbed by the parched earth.

And some morning no letters will arrive at Fez at the time

A REKKA.

appointed; they will wait in vain for the carrier, and terrible accusations will weigh on the miserable wretch. Then at some distant day, in a ditch by the roadside, they will find, near a skeleton, an oil-cloth satchel containing letters, and then they will cease to accuse the unfortunate *rekka*, who has perished in an out-of-the-way corner, like a poor, sick beast that takes refuge in a crevice of the rock when it feels that

death is drawing near, in order to draw its last breath in peace. Poor *rekka!*

We get at last out of this desolate wilderness, we climb one last steep ascent and set foot on a plateau where the vegetation reappears at first thinly scattered dwarf palms, then lentisks, clumps of trees, holm oaks, cork-trees, and in the distance you see blue summits of mountains towering into the sky. Now fields of clover, barley, and colza become visible. We are in a mountainous and woody country, and we camp near a group of Bedouin tents, on the slope of a hill.

Two other caravans with troops of camels have already settled close by, and all night long we are wakened by the bellowing of these horrible beasts.

ON THE WAY TO AÏN-DAÏLEH.

Aïn Daïleh, 22nd February.

THE camels and the caravans have started at break of day. The spot where we are encamped commands an admirable view, an endless expanse of hill ranges, plateaus, woodlands, bathed in a bluish tint stretching away in fainter colour to the peaks of the Djebel Habib, and still farther off to the Tetouan mountains, which raise to the sky their grey-blue summits of an undefinable transparency.

In the foreground on the right are inclines planted with orange- and olive-trees, dingy green copses through which zigzag white pathways. On the left, the upper parts of the hills are laid out in square-shaped fields of lavender, clover, and soil newly ploughed.

We ride for a long time round the flanks of hills, then we come to sandy ground covered with scrubby vegetation, gorse thinly scattered, heather, and here and there stunted shrubs.

Now we get an almost constant view of the sea on our left, spreading in broad marshy estuaries, and penetrating boldly into the recesses of the land. The headland of Cape Spartel grows bigger and bigger, and seems less aërial in shade ; we begin to distinguish its white needle-like lighthouse.

We are riding between dwarf palms, gorse, and heather, over the plain through which runs a pretty broad winding river, the Oued

THE MOUNTAINS OF HABIB AND OF TETOUAN.

Maghsen, which we cross. On the other side a tamarisk grows, the only one in all the plain, planted there no doubt to mark the ford. We ascend hills, traverse some more sandy tracts, and arrive near a

OUR CAMP AT AÏN-DAÏLEH.

village of about a dozen tents, near which we establish our camp on the edge of a plateau that descends in a gentle incline down to the sea, which gleams reflecting the warm gold rays of the setting sun.

Hard by a watercourse winds in numberless meanderings over the plain.

We hear the calls of partridges, and larks are taking flight in all directions. The sportsmen set off with all speed after the partridges, while Forestier and I go in quest of the larks, which we shoot as they rise on the wing.

TANGIER FROM INLAND.

Tangier, 23rd February.

THIS evening we shall be lodged in Tangier. Everybody is eager to get there, the beasts as well as the men. The mules scent the stable; they walk briskly at a sharp pace, their heads erect, their nostrils dilated, and we can scarcely check them when required.

We come to a tiny "café," a reed hut with a roof of boughs under an old fig-tree, and here we all stop to take coffee.

Harris gets more of an Arab than ever, especially of late. He has gone nearly every evening to take tea with the men in their tent, told them stories and listened to theirs.

The men even whisper that he is going to be circumcised; but a still more vital fact, of which they will not breathe a word, is that, under the pretext of learning Arabic, and of taking lessons on the *gimbry* under the muleteers' tent, Harris is preparing "sub rosa" his accession to the throne of Morocco, in the probable event of the people deposing the Sultan and calling Harris to wield the sceptre.

He had even gone so far as to nominate the chief officials, and, through Selim's indiscretion, the composition of the ministry has leaked out: Selim himself is to be *moul-el-mechouar*, the Introducer of Ambassadors, a sort of Lord High Chamberlain; our old Kaïd, Chancellor of the Exchequer; the two muleteers, sherifs or ministers of public worship; Cyclops, Lord Chancellor, and as Justice is proverbially blind, it will now have at least one eye in Morocco; Jubilee is to be Lord of the Privy Seal, and *moul-el-md'ol*, the Master of the Parasol; Antonio Master of the Pickets, or guard of the Sultan's tent; while Brooks is to take over the control of the Kitchen, as Chief Baker or Head Chef.

Harris's kindly heart has not forgotten us either. Ingram is to establish, with the collaboration of Forestier and myself, the official and "Illustrated Gazette of Morocco," under the title of 'The Setting Sun.' To Marshall the delicate post of warden of the harem will be assigned. Of course Harris is bent on having a harem, and well stocked too, for what is a Sultan without a harem? Besides, he has already given orders for furnishing it on the most elaborate scale; five hundred ladies of every shade, and hair, warranted, vaccinated, of a high respectability. Yes—five hundred! neither more nor less. Why, after all, however robust one may be, he has still to take into account that his vigour is not boundless, that Nature has her limits even if the desires of the sultans have none.

The imperial order—for an empire without an order could not possibly exist long—is to be "The Star of Sheshouan," with the motto "quo non ascendam?"

Moreover, he had sketched out a heap of plans—the construction of roads, canals, railways, the building of factories, the opening of mines, decrees ready drawn for reforming the army, the administration of justice, morals, manners, and even fashions. His versatile genius had ranged through every department of imperial sway, and even condescended to the regulation of the most trifling actions in their minutest details.

The third and last incarnation of Harris was planned on grand and majestic lines. Al-Aïssouï was going to jump into the skin of Bouak-

al-Hadj, just as Harris was already enveloped in the hide of Aïssoui· Morocco was going to add another great emperor to its illustrious rulers, and a new dynasty would deluge the empire with myriads of little sherifs.

For Harris—we had almost forgotten to mention that, while carefully examining some old parchment and tracing back his genealogy—had finally discovered, or persuaded himself that he had discovered, which comes to the same thing, that he was descended from Mahomet in some way or other,—he was not quite clear yet through which branch, the parchment was so old, so worm-eaten, and just at the very place where the connection was indicated in the most convincing manner. It was certain, however, that the prophet's blood ran in his veins,—a small drop, it is true, but of such fine quality that it amply compensated for the lack of quantity.

After taking coffee, we stroll for a time in order to stretch our legs. Harris is in front of us, between Selim and Jubilee. The three are holding one another by the hand, frolicking and singing Arab songs as they waddle along. Since this close intimacy prevails between master and servants, the embryo ministers must have in their pockets their patents of nobility as Master of the Parasol and Introducer of Ambassadors, which put them almost on an equality with Aïssoui, and that explains the undue familiarity that exists between them.

We mount our mules again. We cross some rough broken waste ground, pass over streams, reach cultivated fields, and in front of us appears Tangier—Tangier the white, the town tainted by the presence of the Roumis.

We jog on up hill and down dale, then at a last bend in the road we see its outskirts, in which we are in a few minutes. After ascending a steep road bordered by trees, we skirt the gardens outside the town, and enter the lane running behind the Villa de France Hotel, from which we started six weeks before, on the 7th of February, 1889.

We lift Marshall, who can scarcely hold on to his saddle, and carry him to the hotel. The men stow our luggage in our rooms, and the dislocated detachments of our caravan enter the town.

Three days after we hoisted Marshall, wrapped in a number of

woollen blankets, more dead than alive, on board the *Djebel Tarik*. The little steamer brought us to Gibraltar, where we embarked on one of the splendid P. & O. boats, and five days later we were in the midst of the worries of the Custom House, the London fogs, the cabs, the railways, and all the complex accessories of things of the Occident in which we were taking once more our place, as some or other wheel-work, to wage the fierce insane warfare forced upon us by our ill-balanced civilisation.

A MONTH AFTER.

Marshall, completely cured, has got back his cherubic voice, and appeals each morning to echo for news of his Mary Ann.

Ingram is getting a Moorish pavilion built on to his country house.

Harris, who has stayed behind in Morocco, is manipulating the elections, and making a dead set at the Sultanate.

Carlton is now as well as ever, and ready to start on another expedition.

Forestier and I are pegging away at Arabic, and have vague ideas of becoming Mussulmans.

Brooks, unfortunate Brooks, has left a part of his brain in Morocco, and is in a constant tremor lest his sporadic master may drag him on another expedition of the same sort and make him lose the few wits he has still remaining.

Don has been left at Tangier, where he is initiating the rather wild bitches of Islam into the virtuous manners of the canine tribe of Albion.

Rover barks in Arabic, and relates to a select circle of his friends strange stories of the loose ways and curious customs of their Eastern "confrères."

EPILOGUE.

My journey in Morocco was accomplished in the most pleasurable circumstances, thanks to the company of my excellent fellow-travellers: Ingram, of the "Illustrated London News;" A. Forestier, my colleague; W. B. Harris, a globe-trotter, crossed with a man of letters; Marshall, a sympathetic, well-to-do personage; Carlton, who unfortunately fell ill at the outset of the expedition; and thanks also to our hosts at Fez, to whom we are indebted for their most cordial hospitality.

I have recorded the bold accents of Harris's phenomenal trumpet, his encounter with an imaginary lion, and imputed to him designs on the Sultan's parasol as dishonest as they were problematical. This has been as a set-off for having, in a very witty work on Morocco,* most irreverently insinuated that "Tartarin," instead of being a native of Tarascon, might well come from Burgundy, my birthplace, and enhanced this entirely gratuitous supposition by describing a Homeric combat between myself and a ferocious hare, whose neck was adorned with a rose-coloured ribbon, and who was the terror of the neighbourhood, the Burgundian "Tarasque."

I owe it to Ingram to apologise for having, deceived by appearances, prematurely announced the decease of the "Illustrated London News," the complaisant receptacle for a quarter of a century of all the lucubrations of my pencil.

Thinking this celebrated newspaper for ever lost, eaten up by the golden calf of publicity, and contaminated with the photographic infection—that sort of hospital rot which preys upon all its fellows—I

* 'The Land of an African Sultan.' By Walter B. Harris, F.R.G.S. ("Al-Aïssouï"). Published by Sampson Low, Marston & Company.

went into mourning, chanted its "de profundis," and had masses said on its behalf, telling in mournful rhyme of Ingram's sorrow and of the "krack" of the leading illustrated contemporary, gone to rack and ruin, together with its brethren, in the chaos of "positives" and "negatives."

A bird of ill-omen, I found—praise to Allah!—that my pessimistic forecasts had proved false. Indeed, the old athlete, the honoured ancestor of illustrated papers, is now as young and vigorous as ever; the coin jingles gaily in his ever-flowing cash-box, and Ingram gleefully bathes in the golden waves of this Pactolus.

The hebdomadary veteran must be possessed of an iron frame, have his soul riveted in his body, for not only has he borne without wincing this deadly sub-cutaneous infection of collodion, but he does not at all seem the worse for it, as he robustly flourishes and expands under the fraternal eye of the "Penny Illustrated Paper," between his two younger brothers, the "Sketch" and the "English Illustrated Magazine," and by the side of his elegant and spruce sister, the "Lady's Pictorial."

Is this result owing to an early inoculation by Pasteur, which neutralised the fatal effects of the virus? Would it be, on the contrary, this redoubtable improvement that precedes agony? . . . I prefer to believe in the beneficent effects of the opportune "broth" administered in time by the illustrious savant.

I have very wickedly teased Marshall about his silvery voice and its angelic tones. This was solely due to jealousy at not being gifted with such a delicate organ, and to my bitter disappointment at being unable to produce, notwithstanding my repeated efforts, those melodious and crystalline sounds airily flowing from his nightingale throat.

I took good care in my book not to maltreat Forestier, lest the irascible son of Norman...Calabria should retaliate after the sanguinary fashion of his ancestors. As I hold him in high esteem, and only wish him good, the task was an easy one, and I have been able to escape this "vendetta" in perspective.

It was with much pleasure that I paid our kind hosts at Fez my debt of gratitude. This will, I trust, be placed to my credit, so common is the custom of quickly forgetting services rendered to you and speaking ill of those who oblige you.

I bewailed Carlton's illness, which deprived us of a genial companion and invaluable guide.

I sympathised with old Brooks, because the poor fellow, in all his tribulations, never thought of doing so himself.

I have given due recognition to the accurate shooting of Antonio, the accredited purveyor of our larder, less through admiration of his skill than through stomachic gratitude.

In delineating the dismal features of our dear old scamp, the Kaïd, and expatiating on his various qualities, I was actuated by the wish that persons of quiet tastes, who prefer being robbed by people they know rather than by strangers, should be enabled to recognise him by the portrait I drew of him, and should entrust him with the management of their travelling exchequer.

As for our muleteers, they were trusty servants whom I beg to recommend one and all, as well as their beasts (trappings excepted), to those who may feel inclined to go and present their respects to the Sultan of Maghreb-el-Acksa.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018